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Israeli jet raids Palestinian position south of Beirut

SIDON (AFP) — An Israeli warplane staged a raid on Wednesday on a hill south of Beirut where a Palestinian guerrilla group is based, without inflicting casualties, security sources said. The Israeli fighter-bomber fired two missiles at Naameh hill, 15 kilometres south of the Lebanese capital, they said. The raid was the sixth Israeli air strike in less than a month on Naameh hill, where the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) of Ahmad Jibril has positions. One PFLP-GC guerrilla has been killed and eight wounded in the series of eight Israeli raids since the beginning of the year against the group's bases in Lebanon. Jibril's group, which is based in Damascus, opposes the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements. For over a year, the PFLP-GC has not claimed any anti-Israeli attacks.

Arab League will boycott Doha conference

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab League will boycott next week's regional economic summit in the Qatari capital Doha, a diplomatic source in Cairo said Wednesday. "The secretary general of the Arab League Esmat Abdul Meguid will not go to Doha and does not envision [sending] a delegation representing the League because of the positions of the Israeli government which have caused a freeze in the Arab-Israeli peace process," the source said. Dr. Meguid told reporters Wednesday that he would announce the League's position on the Doha conference on Thursday, saying he had "addressed an urgent message on this subject Wednesday to the Qatari foreign affairs minister, Hamad Ben Jassem," (see story on boycott below).

Regent calls for dialogue with Iraq instead of sanctions; Axworthy reaffirms Canada's commitment to support Palestine's refugees

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Wednesday met with visiting Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy and reviewed with him recent developments in the Middle East peace process and the current standoff between Iraq and the United Nations.

The visit of the Canadian foreign minister came amid a flurry of political activities in Amman in the past two days, that included a visit by Palestinian Minister Nabil Shaath and Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos.

During his talks with the Canadian official, Prince Hassan called for political dialogue instead of imposing new sanctions to resolve the crisis between Iraq and the United Nations.

The Regent also called for intensive negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis that should aim at implementing what has been agreed upon between the two sides.

Prince Hassan also said that Jordan will attend next month's Ottawa conference, that is scheduled to discuss the abolishment of the land mines.

Prince Hassan, who accompanied Mr. Axworthy in a tour of the Hitteen refugee camp near Amman, discussed with the Canadian minister the issue of refugees stressing on their right to return to their homeland and or to be compensated.

The Canadian foreign minister said that his country, which chairs the refugee committee in the Mideast multilateral talks, reaffirmed his country's commitment to support and assist the Palestinian refugees.

"It was a very productive and constructive spontaneous visit and I found the opportunity this afternoon to visit the camp and spent some time... it was an opportunity to see how we can contribute to the peace process...and we appreciate Jordanian efforts towards the Palestinian refugees."

He said that one of the major areas in which Canada can assist the refugees is the transfer of knowledge and skills that Canada developed in social programmes and education for young people.

He also expressed Canada's willingness to improve trade and increase investment in the Kingdom "which will enhance peace stability in the region."

Speaking at a joint press conference with the Canadian minister, minister of foreign affairs, Fayez Tarawneh, reiterated Jordan's position that diplomatic efforts should be given a chance to resolve the standoff between Iraq and the U.N.

"We are against sanctions. We are against new sanctions because we believe that sanctions are against people and this would aggravate and increase the sufferings of the Iraqi people. Not only the Iraqi people but also the Jordanian people. That would add to the negative psychological mood that exists here because of the deceleration in the peace process itself," the minister added in the press conference.

"We categorically in Jordan denounce any military action against Iraq, that is basically be against the people (of Iraq). It is the innocent who will suffer in the process. We still say there is room for diplomatic solution for the crisis," he added

Dr. Tarawneh called for a mechanism and a timetable by the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) supervising Iraq's disarmament to lift the eight-year-old sanctions regime against Iraq.

"The UNSCOM has started its work for six and a half year and their should be a timetable for their work. There should be a mechanism by the Security Council to assure the Iraqis that provision 22 of Resolution 687 will be activated if there is a satisfactory report from UNSCOM," Dr. Tarawneh said.

"It seems that part of Iraq's lack of cooperation with the UNSCOM is because the Iraqi leadership has reached a conclusion that the sanctions will not be lifted. Assurances from the world body, from the Security Council would help. This is part of a continuous dialogue rather than new sanctions or, God forbid,

(Continued on page 2)



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, accompanied by Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy visit the Hitteen refugee camp Wednesday. The Regent called upon the world community to ensure the right of return and compensation of Palestinians in exile (Photo by Yousef 'Allan)

Kingdom celebrates King's birthday Friday

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan on Friday celebrates His Majesty King Hussein's 62nd birthday; an occasion marked Thursday with a public holiday and ceremonies to be held by the Ministry of Education and other public organisations.

The Ministry of Education said in a statement Wednesday that the celebrations which will be organised by teachers and students aim at highlighting national unity and higher values upheld by the King and his relentless efforts to promote democracy and enhance national unity.

King Hussein has led Jordan through turbulent decades of conflict and struggle in the Middle East to peace and stability that culminated in the signing of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty in 1994.

His endeavours at the political, economic and social levels coupled with his drive towards promoting democracy, political pluralism and respect for human rights have won him and the Kingdom high esteem at the regional and international levels.

Under King Hussein's rule, Jordan has succeeded in bolstering its ties with Arab and foreign countries and maintains unique relations with the Palestinian people who the King has pledged to help regain their rights and their homeland. On the eve of the anniversary Dr. Mahmoud Masad, head of general education at the Ministry of Education, said that a special programme has been prepared for the celebrations including literary and scientific competitions among students and teachers, art exhibitions, national plays, seminars and a variety of activities by scouts in the various governorates.

The King's birthday was observed at the northern town of Irbid Wednesday through a major celebration attended by Minister of Social Development Mohammad Mamser and other officials.

The celebration, held at the Irbid Municipality, was addressed by the minister who reviewed Jordan's development stages and King Hussein's endeavours for his country and nation.

At the end of the celebration, which was sponsored by the Irbid Society for the Care of Kidney Patients, the minister presented meritorial certificates to kidney donors and those who offered other contributions to the Irbid society.



Farraj says King is well, left hospital

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday had a lymphatic gland removed during an operation carried out at Mayo Clinic in Rochester Hospital in the United States and is now in good health, the King's personal physician Samir Farraj said. "All medical tests on King Hussein turned out to be normal, apart from inflammation on certain lymphatic glands," Dr. Farraj said, adding that "the King underwent a surgical operation to remove one gland under his left armpit that was found to be benign." According to Dr. Farraj, King Hussein left the hospital on Tuesday night.

U.N. Security Council unanimously approves sanctions on Iraq; Baghdad remains defiant

Combined agency dispatches

THE U.N. Security Council adopted by unanimous vote Wednesday a resolution strengthening sanctions on Iraq.

All 15 members of the council voted in favour of the measure, which provides for a travel ban on Iraqi officials who block U.N. inspections and other punitive steps.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz said Wednesday in New York that Baghdad "condemns and rejects" new Security Council sanctions slapped on the country, the official INA news agency reported.

U.S. Ambassador Bill Richardson hailed the move as an "unmistakable" message to Baghdad that it must allow U.N.-mandated inspections of sites suspected of being used to produce or harbour weapons of mass destruction.

"Today's resolution marks our determination to continue to proceed together on a firm and united course," Mr. Richardson told the Security Council after the vote.

"Iraq should heed today's message," he said.

The resolution also warns of "further measures as may be required" if Baghdad refuses to back down and suspends periodic reviews of sanctions until the Oct. 29 decision to bar Americans from taking part in the inspections is reversed.

In a statement read here by the British deputy representative, British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said he hoped Iraqi President Saddam Hussein "will now return to his senses."

"If he continues to defy the will of the U.N., further measures will be taken," Mr. Cook said.

"Saddam should be in no doubt that the Security Council is united and determined," he added.

Iraq refused to back down Wednesday in its showdown with the United Nations, blocking arms inspectors and threatening to shoot down warplanes enforcing "no-fly" zones over the north and south of the country.

At a news conference just hours ahead of a U.N. Security Council vote to impose the new sanctions, Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahhaf repeated a threat to expel U.S. arms experts working for the U.N.

While scoffing at threats of U.S. military action or more U.N. sanctions, Mr. Sahhaf said it was time for Arab leaders to side with Baghdad in its campaign to lift the economic embargo in force since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"We call upon them not to allow the Arab lands to be used to attack Iraq which is suffering for more than seven years," he said.

He also said the "no-fly" zones over north and south Iraq imposed after the 1991 Gulf war and enforced by U.S., British and French warplanes stem from "a unilateral and illegal decision taken by the U.S. and Britain."

"So from the very beginning we resisted it and we will continue to resist it. It is not a matter of shooting daily, whenever we see proper to shoot them we will shoot them," he said.

"We are watching intensified violations of Iraqi airspace in the north and the south by American warplanes," Mr. Sahhaf said. "In addition to violations by warplanes, the Americans are using a second spy plane, a TR1."

He accused Washington of using "threats and blackmail" against other members of the Security Council to impose new sanctions on Baghdad for its Oct. 29 decision to sever cooperation with U.S. nationals working with the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) on disarmament.

"It is an open secret to tell you that some of them have informed us of the tremendous pressure exerted on them by the U.S., the threats they are receiving and even blackmail," he said.

The joint U.S.-British resolution to be voted on in the Security Council calls for the immediate resumption of UNSCOM inspections of arms sites.

It would impose a travel ban on top Iraqi officials and suspend the periodic U.N. reviews of the 1990 sanctions.

Diplomats said France and Russia, which oppose military action, sided with the U.S. and Britain after the text was stripped of references which could have paved the way for a unilateral U.S. military strike on Iraq.

The resolution warns, however, of "further measures as may be required" to force Iraq into complying.

Iraqi authorities on Wednesday blocked U.N. arms inspectors for the ninth time in 10 days by barring access to U.S. experts, said Alan Dacey of the U.N. arms monitoring centre in Baghdad.

UNSCOM has refused to carry out its work as long as the Iraqi ban on U.S. arms inspectors stands.

U.N. sanctions cannot be lifted until UNSCOM certifies it has eliminated Baghdad's chemical and biological arms as well as long-range missiles.

But Baghdad charges that the U.S. is using UNSCOM as a tool to keep the U.N. sanctions in place indefinitely and insists on changes to the make-up of the commission.

Three more Arab states join MENA boycott; Tunisia decides to attend

ABU DHABI (R) — Three more Arab states on Wednesday joined a growing boycott of a regional economic meeting next week due to lack of progress in the Middle East peace process.

But Tunisia said it would attend to try to rescue the peace process.

Bahrain, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) said they would not attend the meeting due to open in Qatar on Sunday. All cited lack of progress to restart the stalled Arab-Israeli peace process.

"Tunisia has decided to attend the Doha conference," Tunisian Foreign Affairs Minister Said Ben Mustapha told Reuters in response to a question.

"Our participation comes within the framework of rescuing the peace process despite the obstinacy of the present Israeli government."

Washington's two heavyweight Arab allies Egypt and Saudi Arabia previously announced they would boycott the U.S.-backed conference.

So far in the region Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Yemen and Tunisia have said they will send delegates to Doha.

The annual conference was launched four years ago with the aim of integrating Israel into Arab economies.

Most Arab states see Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu as blocking U.S.-sponsored Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Some have directly linked their attendance and level of participation at the conference — downgraded from a summit due to lack of top level support — to the peace process.

Oman earlier announced its decision to send a team headed by a commercial and industry ministry under-secretary.

Kuwait said on Sunday its delegation would be headed by a finance ministry under-secretary.

President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, on Tuesday declared the peace process "at a dead end" and said: "All contacts, meetings, conferences... shuttle missions and all international efforts have failed to achieve progress as the Israeli government never keeps its promises."

Five regional states were not invited — Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Syria and Sudan.

Resigning from NCP, Assaf calls on party leadership to step down

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Another resignee of the nascent National Constitutional Party (NCP) predicted a short-lived future for the party after his resignation on Tuesday.

Newly-elected Lower House Deputy Assaf Assaf said Wednesday following his resignation that after only five months of activity, the party's leadership has "deviated from its declared objectives and designated policy."

Mr. Assaf, a tribal figure elected to a seat in Amman's Fifth District last week, is one of more than 100 resignees to accuse the party leadership of failing to uphold democratic principles within the body.

The deputy, who was one of the NCP's 15 stealth candidates, told the Jordan Times that, prior to parliamentary elections, the party's leadership "issued a list of candidates without consulting any member of the general assembly and didn't consult or coordinate with anyone throughout the course of the elections."

"There is also a sense of supremacy among the party's higher offices — a notion that they are somehow superior to the people that they were elected to represent," he said. "For those reasons, I felt that I should resign."

"If the party leadership continues on this path, it is going to lead to the disintegration of the party into the original, nine weaker parties," he predicted.

Monday, NCP Deputy Secretary General Ghazi Fayez also submitted his resignation in protest against the leadership and wrote in his letter of resignation that he could not tolerate the lack of democracy in the party's decision-making process. He called on the party's leadership to step down.

NCP Secretary General Abdul Hadi Majali, a Karak Lower House deputy, told the Jordan Times that he could not respond to Mr. Assaf's resignation since he was only made aware of it through media reports published on Wednesday. However, he added that the resignations and accusations of both deputies would be discussed during an executive council meeting on Saturday.

Mr. Majali said that most of those who have resigned "are not part of the party leadership and were lucky in winning seats in the House with the support of their families."

He also criticised the press for playing a role in the party's misfortunes.

"You journalists have created a fantastic image of the party," he said. "We are six months old, we can't do everything all at one time. We are criticised for not giving enough support to our members. Again, we said many times, the party is young and can't support everyone, people must rely on their families."

The much-touted NCP was established in May and it was expected that it would muster enough support in the 13th Parliament to counter the influence of the Islamic Action Front (IAF), prior to the IAF decision to boycott the elections. The party has been deemed one of the biggest losers of last week's elections after only two of its 11 declared candidates were voted into the Lower House: Incumbent deputies and former ministers Abdul Hadi Al Majali and Abdul Ra'ouf Rawabdeh (NCP undersecretary general).

The party also fielded 18 "stealth" candidates, of whom 15 won seats, the party says.



Happy Birthday and long life Your Majesty

ARAB BANK

Algerians ignore general strike call

Gunmen kill six civilians

Combined agency dispatches

GUNMEN IN Algeria killed six civilians, including three women whom they first raped, then cut their throats and burnt their bodies, while security forces shot dead six suspected Islamist rebels, Algerian newspapers said on Wednesday.

The bodies of the three women were found by government forces in Bainem forest in Algiers, said Al Khabar newspaper.

Troops have had a cordon round the forest since earlier last month and have been trying to flush out suspected guerrillas hiding there. Al Khabar said scores of civilians murdered by gunmen in Bainem had been thrown into the nearby Afroun River.

The newspaper said most of the dead were women who had been abducted, abused and killed. Al Khabar did not say when the bodies of the three women were found.

A lone gunman killed two people — a couple — in Caroubier neighbourhood in Algiers on Monday and later the same day was shot dead by security forces, La Tribune daily said.

Troops killed six suspected rebels in Algiers and in the neighbouring town of Boumerdes on Monday, Al Khabar said.

Two gunmen shot and killed a local government official last week in Bouira area, 60 kilometres east of Algiers, it said, adding that the man, Hamid Aoudjit, had been newly elected to the local council of Belghit town in Bouira province.

He was a member of the ruling National Democratic Rally (RND) which won more than half of the Oct. 23 votes.

His killing brought to at least four the number of RND local officials reported killed in Bouira region in the past week.

More than 65,000 people have died in Algeria's violence since early 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election in which Islamists had taken a huge lead.

Meanwhile, public and private sector workers in the Algerian capital ignored calls by the country's opposition parties for a general strike Wednesday to protest last month's election results.

Early reports said it was business as usual for the capital's shops, banks, post offices, schools and transport systems.

Six opposition parties had called a four-hour general strike here from 0800 GMT to protest against the Oct. 23 local elections, which they condemned as "massive fraud" on the part of Algeria's military regime.

But Algeria's Union Confederation (UGTA) dealt a blow Tuesday to strike plans as it appealed for "respect for republican order."

The National Liberation Front (FLN), member of the governing coalition and former single ruling party, also refused to join the protests of the other parties.

The FLN said it would await the results of legal appeals over the vote-rigging accusations. The Algerian government condemned Wednesday's strike call as illegal, press reports said.

The regime's president, Liamine Zeroual, has largely ignored the protest wave over alleged vote-rigging, which has united thousands of Algerians. Mr. Zeroual said only that the Algerian judiciary could resolve the controversy over the elections, which he earlier hailed as proof of wide pro-government support.

A series of demonstrations has taken place in Algerian cities, some of which brought clashes between protesters and riot police.

Protests in Paris on Monday to express solidarity with victims of the strife in Algeria drew 20,000 people in what organisers said was the biggest mobilisation in France since unrest broke out in its former colony five years ago.



IRAQI CHILDREN DEMONSTRATING: Iraqi schoolchildren demonstrate in front of the U.N. offices in Baghdad on Wednesday. Iraq said it would not bow to an 'oppressive' United Nations resolution imposing a travel ban on Iraqi officials responsible for disrupting U.N. weapons inspections in Iraq (Reuters photo)

Iraqi Kurd group says it killed 150 rivals

ANKARA (AFP) — An Iraqi Kurdish faction said Wednesday that it had killed nearly 150 fighters from a rival Kurd group during its major offensive in northern Iraq at the weekend, supported by Turkish troops.

"Nearly 150 PUK [Patriotic Union of Kurdistan] members were killed during the offensive of the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP]," the KDP Radio broadcasting from northern Iraq said.

The weekend's Turkish-backed offensive forced the rival PUK back to a former ceasefire line in northern Iraq, which the parties agreed to last year. The radio gave no information on KDP and Turkish losses. But the Iraqi National Congress, a pro-Western umbrella group of opposition parties, said Monday that between 70 and 80 KDP fighters and 11 Turkish soldiers had been killed.

Fighting eased this week following the PUK's retreat.

"Iraqi Kurdistan has been calm since Sunday," the PUK's Ankara representative Shazad Saib said Wednesday.

Heavy fighting resumed in northern Iraq on Oct. 13 with a PUK offensive, ending a fragile one-year ceasefire, in which the group made significant gains against the KDP on the battlefield.

Anti-Israeli head of Egypt's writers' union dies

CAIRO (AFP) — The president of Egypt's staunchly anti-Israeli writers' union, Saadeddin Wahba, died Tuesday after a long battle with cancer, a family spokesman said. He was 72.

Wahba's election in April returned Egyptian authors to the Union of Arab Writers after being expelled in 1979 when Egypt became the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel.

A prolific playwright who had a mass appeal with his humorous plays, Wahba also headed since 1985 the International Cairo Film Festival which has systematically refused any Israeli participation.

He refused to show Steven Spielberg's film Schindler's List at the 1994 festival, describing it as "pro-Zionist propaganda which shows the persecution of Jews" and because it had "scenes showing violence and naked women."

One of the main films at the festival that year was an anti-Israeli Egyptian production "The road to Eilat," which told the story of an Egyptian navy commando who sank Israeli oil tankers in the Red Sea Israeli port of Eilat.

A graduate from the police academy in 1949, Wahba served as a police officer before switching to studies in philosophy and finding his calling in journalism, the theatre and cinema.

Best known for his play "Al Mahrussa" (the protected one) which depicted the hardships of Egyptian peasants, Wahba had planned a remake entitled Al Mahrussa 2015.

He had said the new version would deal with post-normalisation between Israel and his country, when Egypt would be owned by what he described as an Egyptian-Israeli land company.

Wahba received the French legion of honour in 1976 and in 1988 he was awarded the highest Egyptian medal of merit.

He is survived by his wife Samiha Ayub, an actress.

Officials deny Jerusalemite held on suspicion of espionage

By Alia A. Toukan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Amid conflicting accounts, officials Wednesday dismissed reports that an Arab resident of Jerusalem was detained on suspicion of spying for Israel.

Israeli newspapers reported Tuesday that a Palestinian man carrying a Jordanian passport had been taken into custody by Jordanian authorities following suspicions of espionage.

According to the newspaper reports, the suspected man, also said to carry an Israeli passport, is involved in a joint venture with an Israeli in the diamond industry. He reportedly rented an office in the same building as Hamas leader Khaled Misha'al, who was targeted in a failed assassination attempt by the Israeli Mossad on Sept. 25.

According to an international news agency report, Jordanian officials "confirmed" that the man was first detained, and on Wednesday released, but failed to elaborate on the reasons why he was taken into custody.

An informed Jordanian source told the Jordan Times yesterday, however, that the man in question was not arrested in the first place. "Whoever circulated the news of his arrest was seeking publicity for himself," the source said, dismissing the whole issue as a non-event.

Other officials contacted by the Jordan Times said they had no information on the reported arrest.

The spokesman of the Israeli embassy in Amman, Roey Gilad, maintained that the issue is a purely Jordanian affair since the suspected man is a Jordanian passport holder, and as such, Israel has nothing to do with the matter, he said. Mr. Gilad refuted reports that the man in question is an Israeli citizen.

Jordanian-Israeli relations reached an all-time low in September following the Mossad's botched assassination attempt on Mr. Misha'al. While diplomatic contacts have remained intact, the wounds to the Jordanian-Israeli "normalisation" process caused by the aborted attempt have been slower to heal.

Regent calls for dialogue with Iraq instead of sanctions

(Continued from page 1)

military retaliation," he added.

The minister denied news reports that Jordan has allowed the United States to station troops on its soil saying that these are merely "rumours." "Jordan neither has American troops nor will it be a base for American weapons," he said.

As for the crisis between Baghdad and the U.N., Mr. Axworthy said that his country supports any decision that might be adopted by the world body and called upon Iraq to abide by the U.N. resolutions.

"There are specific obligations and responsibilities under the U.N. resolutions. We expect them to be met. We support the U.N. Security Council's efforts to bring another resolution in this particular issue," he said.

"We have supported the establishment of the Resolution 986 which is designed to ensure that humanitarian aid is presented to Iraqi people. In fact we made a $16 million contribution and we have certain Canadian companies that are certified under the U.N. process," said the minister, referring to the oil-for-food agreement that allowed Iraq to sell $2 billion worth of oil every six months to enable to buy food and medicine for its people.

The Canadian support for new sanctions against Iraq was echoed during the visit of Luxembourg foreign minister who headed a European Union (EU) delegation to Jordan on Tuesday.

"Saddam Hussein, the leader of Iraq, must comply with this resolutions. We cannot allow that this country to develop weapons of mass destruction," said Mr. Poos who left Jordan after leading an EU delegation.

"Until now the Iraqi conflict seems not to have changed fundamentally. The evolution of this conflict will put heavy burden on the neighbours of Iraq including Jordan. We fully understand the difficulty of this country," Mr. Poos said in a press conference late Tuesday evening at the end of a one-day visit to the Kingdom.

Turning to the deadlock in the peace talks between the Palestinians and Israelis, Mr. Poos said that the EU will intensify efforts to bring the two sides back to the negotiating table.

He said that the EU has suggested a "code of conduct" to enhance talks between the two sides.

"The idea of a code of conduct... has been discussed in the latest weeks by our special envoy Ambassador [Miguel] Moratinos with the two parties and is nearly to be adopted," he said.

"This code of conduct... will lead to the solution of the crucial problems which are still remain open," Mr. Poos added.

He said that the European efforts must not be considered as contradicting with U.S. peace efforts but complementing them.

"They (EU efforts) are well coordinated with our friends and partners, the Americans," he added.

"The involvement of the European Union is economic but it is also political," he emphasised.

"The whole process is a global process. All (countries) including Jordan must be involved in looking for a definite settlement," Mr. Poos added.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian negotiator, Nabil Shaath, who arrived here on Wednesday and held talks with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, said that the recent round of talks in Washington between Palestinian and Israeli negotiators were fruitless.

The Washington talks "have not made one iota of progress on the land issue, such as redeployment in the territories and the freeze of settlement building, nor any progress in the interim issues such as the (Gaza) airport and port," Mr. Shaath told reporters following his meeting with Dr. Majali.

Mr. Shaath said he relayed to the Dr. Majali detailed information about the peace process and what happened in Washington "even though we appreciate very much the role (U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine) Albright has played in attempting to bring the parties and to implement what has been agreed upon."

Mr. Shaath described a stating made by Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy statement that the talks has resulted in enhancing trust between the two sides, as a mere nicety.

"Trust, according to dictionary is the continued congruence words and deeds. It does not happen by being nice to each other. I am sure that Mr. Levy was positive and warm in this meeting and I think the atmosphere was friendly. Trust is something else, trust is seeing your words turn into actions in a continued way."

He called upon the American administration to maintain pressure on Israel to implement the agreements signed with the Palestinians.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 773111-19
PROGRAMME TWO

Thursday Programmes
14:10 ..... New Kids on the Block
14:30 ..... My Little Fairy Tale
15:00 America's Funniest People
15:30 ..... He Shoots, He Scores
16:00 ..... National Geographic
16:30 The Boy From Andromeda
17:00 ..... French Programmes
19:00 ..... News in French
19:15 ..... French Progarmmes
19:30 ..... News Headlines
19:35 ..... Trivial Pursiut
20:00 ..... Parenthood
20:30 Lois and Clark — Superman
21:10 ..... Oprah Winfrey Show
22:00 ..... News in English
22:30 Feature Film: "Implicated"
23:59 ..... Music Show

Friday Programmes
14:10 The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin
14:30 ..... Fred and Barney
15:00 ..... Wishbone
15:30 ..... Lucky Luke
16:00 ..... Family Matters
16:20 Doc. — Natural Wonders of Europe
17:00 ..... French Programmes
19:30 ..... News Headlines
19:35 Doc. — Life on the Internet
20:00 Comedy — Are You Being Served
20:30 ..... Brisco County
21:10 ..... The History Makers
22:00 ..... News in English
22:30 ..... Mini-series
23:30 ..... Daddy's Girls

PRAYER TIMES

04:38 ..... Fajr
05:58 ..... (Sunrise) Duha
11:20 ..... Dhuhr
14:17 ..... 'Asr
16:42 ..... Maghreb
18:02 ..... 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 5516245
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Skies will be sunny during the weekend, temperatures around average, and winds variable occasionally becoming northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman 09/22
Aqaba 15/29
Deserts 07/24
Jordan Valley 14/29

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 21, Aqaba 27. Humidity readings: Amman 32 per cent, Aqaba 34 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Tawfiq Qub'ain 623029
Dr. Ghaleb Zawaideh ... 736011
Dr. Hisham Kan'an 790286
Dr. Khaldoun Asfour 699440
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Fawzi Abul Haija 252970
Al Quds pharmacy ..... (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad 985550
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency ... 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, ... 644281/6
Akileh Maternity, ... 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 66416-4/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, ... 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery ... 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital ..... (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital ..... (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital ..... (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital ..... (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital ..... (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital ..... (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital ..... (03)314-111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified.
Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08(53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:15 ..... Sanaa (RJ)
08:25 ..... Bombay (RJ)
09:15 ..... Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:30 ..... New Delhi (RJ)
10:00 ..... Colombo (RJ)
10:05 ..... Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:05 ..... Beirut (RJ)
10:20 ..... Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
15:00 .. New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:25 ..... London (RJ)
17:20 ..... Moscow (RJ)
18:05 ..... Kuwait (RJ)
18:05 ..... Athens (RJ)
18:55 ..... Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
19:05 ..... Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)
22:50 ..... Athens (RJ)

Other Flights
13:15 ..... Riyadh (SV)
14:10 ..... Shariqah (AH)
15:00 ..... Doha (QR)
15:20 ..... Muscat, Doha (GF)
16:00 ..... Dubai (EK)
16:30 ..... Rome (AZ)
20:00 ..... Tel Aviv (MS)
20:40 ..... Cairo (MS)
23:10 ..... Istanbul (TK)
23:30 ..... London, Beirut (BA)
23:35 ..... Larnaca (CY)

Royal Wings (RW)
(For Thursday and Friday)
07:45 ..... Aqaba (RW)
09:05 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:20 ..... Tel Aviv (RW)
18:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:20 ..... Aqaba (RW)
22:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:20 ..... Beirut (RJ)
07:25 ..... Moscow (RJ)
10:30 Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)
11:00 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
11:30 ..... Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
11:30 ..... Aqaba, Paris (RJ)
12:05 ..... Kuwait (RJ)
12:15 ..... London (RJ)
12:20 ..... Athens (RJ)
19:35 ..... Larnaca (RJ)
20:10 ..... Cairo (RJ)
20:30 ..... Jeddah (RJ)
23:00 ..... Jakarta (RJ)
23:00 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights
00:35 ..... Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 ..... Athens (OA)
06:40 ..... Beirut, London (BA)
08:00 ..... Beirut (ME)
11:20 ..... London (BA)
14:45 ..... Riyadh (SV)
15:00 ..... Algiers (AH)
15:55 ..... Doha (QR)
16:20 ..... Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
17:00 ..... Muscat, Dubai (EK)
17:30 ..... Rome (AZ)
21:20 ..... Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40 ..... Cairo (MS)

Royal Wings
(For Thursday and Friday)
06:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
08:15 ..... Aqaba (RW)
09:30 ..... Amman (QAIA) (RW)
16:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:55 ..... Tel Aviv (RW)
20:30 ..... Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50 ..... Aqaba (RW)



n front of the U.N. offices in Bagh
ations resolution imposing a trade
Iraq (Reuters photo)

salemite
espionage



PRINCE INAUGURATES HANDICAPPED FACILITY: Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Wednesday inaugurates a special hydraulic lift for the disabled at the Parliament building. Prince Ra'd said the construction of this lift is a significant step, designed to encourage government departments to follow the construction code for people with special needs. Also attending the inauguration ceremony was Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Zeid Rifai (Petra photo)

Regent tours Spanish excavations at the Citadel

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Wednesday inspected excavations being conducted by a Spanish archaeological team at the Citadel in Amman and listened to briefings by local officials on the progress of the work.

The dig, which is being conducted in conjunction with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, entails the excavation and restoration of an ancient Umayyad city.

The Citadel site includes the Jordan Archaeological Museum, which houses a collection of Jordanian antiquities dating from prehistoric times through the 15th century.

Accompanied by Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abbadi, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Biltaji, Department of Antiquities Director General Ghazi Bisheh, and Spanish ambassador Eudaldo Martinez, Prince Hassan toured the site and inspected the restoration work going on at the Umayyad palace, the ancient monuments, and the mosque, which was built in the style of Al Hamra Castle in Andalusia, Spain.

The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities said the restoration programme at the Citadel is one in a series of restorations of the Umayyad sites in the Kingdom, which is being sponsored by the Regent and Spanish universities in order to strengthen Jordanian-European cooperation in cultural fields.

In remarks to local officials, the Regent proposed that a sound and light system be installed to relate the history of the site. He also paid tribute to the excavators and officials involved in the project.

Dr. Bisheh presented a briefing on the activities of the Department of Antiquities and its collaborative work with the Spanish team.

Work will continue at the Citadel to unearth the entire ancient Umayyad city, he said.

The head of the Spanish team also briefed the Regent on the nature of work going on at the site.

Dr. Bisheh said the project is divided into two stages. The first stage entails restoring the site, building external walls around the Citadel, and restoring the mosque, all of which will be undertaken by the Department of Antiquities.

The second part, he said, is being financed by Spain and entails the restoration of the Umayyad castle.

The excavators so far have unearthed the main hall, a bath, and the mosque, which was attached to the Umayyad Castle.

Princess Sarvath opens blood bank in Shmeisani

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Princess Sarvath Wednesday inaugurated a blood bank branch in the Shmeisani district in west Amman, which will serve 400,000 local residents.

The bank is housed in a building donated by the Greater Amman Municipality, while a number of private hospitals donated funds totalling JD75,000 for refurbishing and furnishing the premises.

The blood bank, which will offer its services free of charge, is located near the hospitals that financed its renovation and within residential areas, according to Janet Merza, the director of the blood bank at the Ministry of Health and Medical Care.

Dr. Merza said the blood bank, which will be staffed by personnel from the ministry, will operate 24 hours a day.

The location of a blood bank in this district will benefit both donors and recipients in the western area of the capital, she added.

Dr. Merza urged the public to donate blood, saying that donations can save people whose lives depend on transfusions.

She thanked the private hospitals and the Greater Amman Municipality, which donated JD10,000 for refurbishing and maintaining the building.

The blood bank has been transferred to the ownership of the Ministry of Heath and Medical Care.

Also attending the ceremony were acting Minister of Health and Medical Care Munther Haddadin, Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi, and other officials.

Work on Wadi Haddadeh-downtown tunnel to be completed this month

AMMAN (J.T.) — Work on the tunnel linking Wadi Haddadeh with the downtown area is scheduled to be completed this month, according to project manager Amr Gharibeh.

"We were interested in decreasing the amount of traffic, opening up Haddadeh St., and facilitating pedestrian movement," Mr. Gharibeh said.

The project was the result of cooperation between several organisations. The tunnel was co-designed by a local company and a firm from New Zealand, excavation was carried out by an Italian company, and local municipality authorities supervised the construction work, Mr. Gharibeh explained.

He added that the work went smoothly, surpassing expectations.

"We were able to finish the project three months ahead of schedule. Work was uninterrupted and construction crews worked around the clock," he said.

Construction consisted of a one-level intersection and a traffic light located at Wadi Haddadeh, a 188-metre tunnel with a pedestrian walkway 2.4 metres in width, and concrete bridge at King Hussein St. that is 25m long and 9m wide, Mr. Gharibeh said.

An official ceremony to inaugurate the JD4 million tunnel is planned at the end of the month, he added.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Royal Decrees accept resignations, confer Istiqlal medal

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued Wednesday accepting the resignations of Basil Jardaneh, chairperson of the Royal Jordanian (RJ) board of directors, and board member Badr Esteitieh. Another Royal Decree was issued endorsing the appointment of Walid Asfour as RJ board chairperson, and Taher Masri, Adel Qudah, and a representative from the Central Bank of Jordan to be designated as members of the RJ board. A third Royal Decree was issued conferring Jordan's Independence (Istiqlal) Medal of the First Order on Pakistani ambassador to Jordan Ali Sarwar Naqvi on the occasion of the end of his tour of duty in Jordan.

Polish products to go on display at expo

AMMAN (Petra) — Polish products will go on display at Amra Hotel Monday during a trade exhibition being held by the Polish embassy. The exhibition reflects the growing trade relations between Poland and Jordan.

Ministry to mark international AIDS day

AMMAN (Petra) — Preparations are underway at the Ministry of Health and Medical Care to mark the International Day for Fighting AIDS, which falls on Dec. 1. The Health Education Department will organise seminars and lectures, as well as a major symposium on AIDS prevention.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

* German film "Caspar David Friedrich" (in English with commentary in Arabic by Dr. Mazen Asfour) at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

CHARITY BAZAAR

* Charity bazaar (held by the Queen Alia Foundation for Hearing and Speech) at the late Abdul Rahim Jardaneh House, Jabal Amman, Mango Street (Tel. 819141), until Nov. 13.

EXHIBITIONS

* Paintings by Jordanian artist Nasr Abdul Aziz at Darat Al Funum, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 21.
* Works by Syrian artist Khaled Al-Maz at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Nov. 22.
* Graphics and oil paintings by Mu'ayyad Al A'dhami at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Nov. 13.
* Graphics and oil paintings by Mu'ayyad Al A'dhami at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Nov. 13.
* Bani Hamida fall exhibition "Encounter" (displaying rugs designed by Japanese textile designer Tomoko Iyoda) at Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 25 (Tel. 658696/7).
* Exhibition of wicker accessories from Wadi Rayan, handicrafts and gift items at the Jordan Rivers Designs showroom (Tel. 613081), until Nov. 23.
* Works by Bahraini artist Sheikh Rashid Al Khalifa at Darat Al Funum, Jabal Weibdeh, until Nov. 15. Also displaying a new collection of works by contemporary Arab artists (Tel. 643251/2).
* Paintings by Patrice Cadennec at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 20.

PSD, Swedish group sign agreement on traffic safety

AMMAN (Petra) — The Public Security Department (PSD) Wednesday signed an agreement with the Swedish organisation Sweroad to help Jordan modernise its legislation and introduce safety measures for vehicles and roads.

Under the agreement, which was signed by PSD Director Nasouh Muhieddin and Jan Henricsson, the Swedish organisation's vice president, Sweroad will provide technical assistance and train personnel involved in enacting legislation on road safety, vehicle testing, and analysis of road accident reports.

The agreement covers the second phase of a project undertaken by the traffic institute to ensure road safety, according to a PSD statement.

In the first phase of the project, the Swedish organisation conducted a thorough study of the traffic problems in Jordan, training requirements, police control measures, driver and vehicle testing, and matters connected with traffic safety, according to the statement.

Lt. Gen. Muhieddin, in remarks at the signing ceremony, thanked the Swedish government and Sweroad for their assistance and expressed hope that the agreement on the second phase of the project will lay down practical steps to help Jordan deal with traffic problems.

Ahmad Alawi, veteran journalist, dies at 55

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi Wednesday noted with sadness the death of Ahmad Hasan Alawi, a veteran journalist, who passed away Wednesday at Al Hussein Medical Centre at the age of 55.

The late Mr. Alawi was born in Kufr Soum, Irbid, in 1942. He was one of the founders of the Jordan Press Association (JPA), which was established in 1969. He spent more than 30 years of his life working for the Jordanian and Arab press.

He worked as a reporter, editorial secretary at the Jordan News Agency, owner and editor-in-chief of Al Fajr Al Iktisadi and Al Wifaq Al Arabi magazines, editor-in-chief of the weekly Akhbar Al Usbou, and director general at the Palestinian National Authority Information Ministry.

Jordan to receive first shipment of American F-16 fighters next month

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan will receive the first shipment of F-16 jet fighters from the U.S. next month as part of a $300 million American military aid package to the Kingdom, according to Major General Mohammad Ababneh, the chief of staff of the Jordanian Royal Air Force.

Maj. Gen. Ababneh said the balance of the 16 jets will be received early next February.

The first group of Jordanian pilots and technicians who were sent to the U.S. to train on these planes will return with the first delivery, according to Maj. Gen. Ababneh.

Upon the arrival of the planes, other technicians and pilots will start training on them, he said.

Last December, Jordan received $100 million in military aid from the U.S. as part of the $300 million pledged by the Clinton administration. This assistance includes 18 UH-IH helicopters, 50 M-60A3 tanks, 250 M-1008 and M-1009 trucks, two MK-4 personnel boats, air-sea rescue boats, machine guns, and 1,000 night vision goggles, as well as the fighter planes.

Maj. Gen. Ababneh noted that the U.S. administration endorsed the aid programme to Jordan in 1994 following the signing of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

Police continuing efforts to locate missing 17-year-old; abductee located in Syria

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Balqa police are still searching for a 17-year-old youth who last Thursday went missing from his family's home in Mahes, according to official sources.

Hadi Ayed left his home Nov. 6, telling his family he was going to Fuheis to certify his birth certificate, and has not returned since, a police official said.

The minor's family pleaded Wednesday in one of the Arabic dailies for their son's safe return and said they have notified all police stations and hospitals.

The family told police that their son, who departed in the early morning with only JD7 in his pocket, had no enemies and had not previously left home without notice.

The official told the Jordan Times Wednesday evening that police are continuing their efforts to locate the missing youth.

"We have combed the area near his house and used police dogs, but so far we have been unable to discover his whereabouts," the official said.

He added that "it is possible that the youth went looking for a job in one of the cities without informing his family."

Meanwhile, in a similar incident, a 17-year-old Zarqa youth who was missing for 10 months was located in Syria after being kidnapped by a Syrian national who enlisted him in the Syrian army as a substitute for his son.

According to an article that appeared in Wednesday's issue of Al Arab Al Yawm, the youth, Walid Abu Hamid, was kidnapped by a Syrian man identified as Ramadan Khalil.

The report said Mr. Khalil lured the youth to Syria after he drugged him, and "threatened to kill him if he did not say in front of the Syrian authorities that he was Mr. Khalil's son Mohammad."

The youth told authorities that Mr. Khalil handed him over to the Syrian authorities claiming that he was his son who was trying to escape serving his time in the military.

"I denied that I was his son, and informed them of my actual identity, but I could not prove it because my kidnapper hid my identification documents," the youth was quoted as saying in the article.

He added that the Syrian authorities decided to detain both of them, until Mr. Abu Hamid's father travelled to Syria and solved the problem.

Traffic department announces vehicle safety inspections to begin next week

AMMAN (Petra) — The Public Security Department (PSD) will launch an intensive campaign beginning Nov. 16 to ensure that vehicles are road-worthy and in good working order for the upcoming winter season.

PSD sources said the annual campaign has the goal of reducing road accidents, which normally increase in winter.

The traffic police will examine windshield wipers, lights, tires, mirrors, engines, and brakes, among other parts, and will place a sticker on the front windshield showing that the vehicle has been tested, according to the sources.

The source added that if a fault is discovered in a vehicle, the owner will be instructed to have it repaired within one week. Otherwise, he or she will be liable to pay fines.

The PSD has circulated instructions to patrol police to carry out the campaign and has urged motorists to ensure that their vehicles are safe to guarantee their own safety and that of other road users.

Meanwhile, the Civil Defence Department (CDD) recently announced that the Higher Civil Defence Council will supervise operations for rescuing people cut off by snow or those whose homes are flooded by rain.

Stating that the civil defence teams will be ready to deal with any emergency, CDD Director General Theeb Ma'ani called on the public to take precautionary measures and keep away from low-lying areas during heavy rain storms.

Environmental group director urges measures to reduce pollution

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Recent studies have shown that the diesel fuel in Jordan contains 4 per cent of the pollutant sulpha, a level 150 times greater than the limit allowed in Europe, said Asem Faqir, vice president of the Friends of the Environment society (FOE).

In 1995, a pilot project on measuring automotive exhaust emissions in Jordan, carried out by the Jordanian Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme's Global Environment Facilities, found that out of the 500 diesel vehicles tested for pollution, 60 per cent went over the Jordanian limit for smoke density of 65 per cent, while in the U.S. the allowed limit is less than 30 per cent, Mr. Faqir said.

Out of the 666 gasoline engine vehicles tested, 51.65 per cent failed the carbon monoxide test, 39.64 per cent failed the carbon dioxide test, and 20.27 per cent failed the oxygen test, he added.

This situation is due to several factors, including the use of low-quality fuel (leaded gasoline with high sulphur content diesel), the old fleet of private cars and public transport vehicles, the overload of public transport, the incomplete and unscientific inspection tests by the traffic police, and the high customs duties for both vehicles and spare parts, which leads to a poorly-serviced fleet of vehicles, Mr. Faqir explained.

A study conducted by the Royal Scientific Society and the Environment Technology Centre-Environment Canada (Ottawa) to monitor air pollution in Amman from 1987 through 1989 found that levels of air pollutants correlated well with traffic activities, which meant that transportation was the major source of air pollution in the city, he said.

"By now, the pollution levels pose a much more serious danger to our health," he added.

The pollutants in low-grade fuel, particularly diesel, cause health hazards such as preventing blood from absorbing oxygen, damaging the eyes and lungs, creating smog and acid rain, reducing visibility, and damaging the ozone layer, he explained.

To effect a healthier and less polluted environment in Jordan, Mr. Faqir said, some steps should be followed immediately, including:

- Increasing public awareness about auto pollution and its dangers,
- Promoting the use of smaller, more efficient automobiles,
- Organising a tighter auto inspection routine on the roads and at registration stations and enforcing anti-pollution laws,
- Establishing auto service centres that have properly-trained personnel and proper pollution testing equipment,
- Decreasing customs duties on automobiles and spare parts,
- Upgrading public transportation buses and developing alternative public transport methods, and
- Upgrading the technology of the national oil refinery to produce better quality unleaded and sulphur-free fuels in gasoline and diesel.

Killings shadow Karachi's descent into violence

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — The killing of four Americans and their Pakistani driver Wednesday opened another grim chapter in Karachi's decline from a pleasant port to a cauldron of political and sectarian violence.

Once Pakistan's second city was a relaxed place with a vibrant commercial centre where people strolled along the Indian Ocean seafront by night and made money by day.

But the teeming city of 12 million has been on the boil since 1986 when ethnic riots erupted between its Urdu-speaking majority or mohajirs and migrants from other provinces.

Hundreds of people were killed in days of riots as the mohajirs, Muslims who migrated from India at partition in 1947, led by the Mohajir National Movement (MQM), fought ethnic pushtuns, Punjabis and Sindhis.

The violence took a new turn after June 1992 when the government launched a huge army-led operation against the MQM which soon broke out into gunfights between MQM supporters and the security forces.

A spree of revenge killings by the MQM and a splinter faction, haqiqi, has since kept the death toll rising together with random sectarian violence by militants of the Muslim Sunni majority and Shiite minority sects.

more than 380 people have so far been killed in 1997, 500 in 1996 and 2,000 in 1995.

The violence has put a near-stop to fresh investment in the city, whose infrastructure groans under the weight of the heaviest concentration of people on Pakistan.

The killing of the four U.S. nationals follows the murder of two Sunni Muslim clerics this month and a suspected ethnic attack on a passenger bus in which four people were killed.

It was not the first attack on Americans on Pakistani soil but the morning rush-hour ambush was the first time that employees of a U.S. multinational company were targeted.

The four dead and their driver were employees of the U.S. petroleum giant Union Texas and its Pakistani subsidiary Union Texas Pakistan.

In 1995, gunmen ambushed a U.S. consulate vehicle killing two members of staff.

U.S. counterterrorist specialists said they believed that attack was in revenge for the arrest in Pakistan of bomb plot suspect Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, who was suspected of masterminding the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing and other guerrilla attacks.

Wednesday's attack came a day after a Pakistani national, Mir Aimal Kansi, was found guilty of murdering two Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) employees and jailed for 20 years by a court in the United States.

The court found him guilty of carrying out the attack outside the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, in January 1993. He used a Kalashnikov assault rifle.



The body of an American (left) and his Pakistani driver lie in the back of a car in Karachi (Reuter photo)

Bomb defused in centre of Rome

ROME (AFP) — A home-made bomb was defused Tuesday near the historic heart of Rome shortly before it was set to explode as political leaders attended a rally nearby, police said.

The pipe-bomb, packed with one kilogramme of explosives and equipped with a timing device, was in a black bag that was placed several hundred metres from the famous Navona Square and near the city's main courthouse.

It was timed to explode at 5:15 p.m. (16:15 GMT), but was spotted by a Belgian tourist who noticed wires coming out of the bag.

If it had exploded, "it would have not only caused serious damage to the facades of the surrounding buildings, but would have caused the deaths of passers-by" in this very busy neighbourhood, an investigator said.

Massimo d'Alema, the head of the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS), the biggest party in the government coalition, and former top anti-Mafia judge Antonio di Pietro walked past the scene shortly afterwards en route to an election rally nearby.

They were on their way to support Rome Mayor Francesco Rutelli ahead of Sunday's first-round municipal elections.

Italy's secretary of state for the interior, Adriana Vigneri, described the incident as "very serious" because of timing of the bomb.

But Rome police chief Rino Monaco said: "It is too soon to make interpretations. Nobody has claimed the attack and the target may have been the courts."

Mr. Rutelli, the mayor of Rome, said: "I hope there was nothing premeditated in this to sow panic and terror in the city."

Some 12 million people will vote in Sunday's first-round municipal elections in towns and cities across the country including Rome, Naples, Palermo and Venice.

The elections are widely predicted to result in victories for the centre-left government, and there has been little controversy in the campaign so far.

A bomb exploded near Milan's city hall in April on the eve of voting for the city's mayor. Investigators suspect anarchist militants of planting the bomb, which caused no casualties.

U.N. team seeks quick start to refugee massacre probe

KINSHASA (AFP) — A U.N. team probing alleged refugee massacres in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Wednesday sought a swift go-ahead from President Laurent Kabila's regime for its long-stalled mission.

"We are going to officially inform the authorities of our presence and request a meeting with the liaison committee," said Jose Diaz, spokesman for the team, whose leaders arrived in Kinshasa, capital of the former Zaire, Tuesday.

The committee, headed by Reconstruction Minister Etienne Richard Mbaya, handles relations between the United Nations and Mr. Kabila, who had repeatedly refused U.N. investigators access to regions where reported mass killings of Rwandan refugees have taken place.

Until Wednesday morning, the DRC government had made no official statement on the arrival of the U.N. team, and Mr. Diaz said they were keen to get the final green light for their mission as soon as possible.

"We are ready to work," he said.

Reports by U.N. human rights staff and non-governmental organisations have provided strong evidence of the slaughter of Rwandan refugees as Mr. Kabila's former rebels launched a victorious insurrection in the former Zaire.

Kinshasa has successfully demanded that the U.N. mission also look into rights abuses under former dictator Mobutu Sese Seko — ousted by Mr. Kabila in May.

The head of the U.N. team, Togolese magistrate Atsu-Koffi Amega, who was recalled to the U.N.'s New York headquarters on Oct. 3 following more than five weeks of stonewalling from the DRC government, said here Tuesday that he had "a lot of hope" for the current mission.

"The New York consultations worked," Mr. Amega said.

Kinshasa had previously barred the U.N. investigators from travelling to the northwestern region of Mbandaka — site of alleged refugee massacres following Mr. Kabila's seizure of power.

He has also insisted that the U.N. mission start in the east of the country, where the first refugee killings were said to have occurred.

However, an Oct. 25 agreement between Mr. Kabila and the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Bill Richardson, opened the way for the team to "deploy, without interference, to the areas it wishes in the order it wishes."

In return, the United Nations agreed to extend its enquiry to cover the last years of Mobutu's dictatorship.

Mr. Kabila has refused to allow his forces to be seen as solely responsible for any atrocities in Zaire, citing the inextricable links between the actions of his men, those of Mobutu's forces, and ethnic strife endemic in the Great Lakes region.

Hundreds of thousands of Rwandans poured into the Zaire of Marshal Mobutu during their neighbouring country's ethnic civil war of 1994. Hutu militia extremists and government troops were routed in July that year by the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

From October last year, Rwandan Hutus found themselves caught up in a new maelstrom in eastern Zaire as Mr. Kabila's alliance, which included many Tutsis, began the uprising that led seven months later to the fall of Mobutu, who died in exile last September.

Japan, N. Korea agree on normalisation talks

TOKYO (AFP) — A delegation from Japan's ruling camp and North Korea's ruling party agreed Wednesday that stalled talks on diplomatic normalisation should resume as soon as possible, a report said.

The agreement was reached at a meeting between Yoshihiro Mori, head of the Japanese mission, and Kim Yong Gon, director of the international department of the Workers' Party of Korea, Jiji Press said in a report from Pyongyang.

But the delegation from the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its allies, which flew to Pyongyang Tuesday, also sparked the ire of its hosts by raising suspicions that a Japanese woman had been kidnapped by North Korea.

Tokyo and Pyongyang agreed in late August to resume preparatory talks on normalising diplomatic ties as soon as possible, and the three-day parliamentary mission was aimed at paving the way for negotiations.

Mr. Mori raised suspicions that a Japanese woman had been abducted by North Korean agents to train its spies. The previous talks on normalising bilateral ties stalled in November 1992 when Pyongyang walked out after Tokyo raised the issue of the woman's suspected abduction.

The meeting in Pyonyang coincides with a week-long return home by 15 Japanese wives of North Korean men, the first such visit in decades, following a deal struck in September.

"Since there are feelings in Japan that the brief return home of Japanese wives and the suspicion of abductions are important issues, we would like to proceed with talks on specifics," Mr. Mori was quoted as telling Mr. Kim.

Mr. Kim replied that the abduction was "a fabrication and we do not want this issue raised any more as it only provokes us," according to the Jiji Press report.

Japanese authorities suspect North Korean agents abducted at least 10 Japanese nationals in the 1970s and 1980s, an accusation which North Korea has flatly denied.

But Mr. Kim promised further efforts to allow more Japanese wives married to North Koreans to visit their homeland following Mr. Mori's request.

North Korea would work towards realisation of visits home by more Japanese wives "during our generation," Mr. Kim was quoted as saying by Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK).

The Japanese delegation also called on North Korea to hand over four Japanese Red Army members involved in the hijacking of a Japanese passenger plane in 1970, Jiji said.

The request for the repatriation was made by Masaaki Nakayama, a visiting House of Representative member of the LDP, but there was no response from his North Korean counterpart, it said.

The four hijackers were among nine Red Army members who hijacked a Japan Airlines domestic flight and forced it to land in North Korea in March 1970.

The hijackers have been demanding they be allowed to return home without fear of arrest. Japanese lawmakers are seeking their repatriation to prosecute them.

The Japanese delegation comprises 11 officials from the LDP and its two parliamentary coalition allies, the Social Democratic Party and New Party Sakigake.

Mr. Mori requested a meeting with Kim Jong Il who was formally named general secretary of the ruling party in early October.

Before the meeting with North Korean representatives, the delegation visited the Kumsusan Memorial Palace where the body of Jong Il's father and former leader Kim Il Sung is preserved.

The 15 Japanese women living in North Korea arrived in Japan from a country suffering from years of recession and severe food shortages caused by two years of flooding.

During the 1960s and 1970s, about 1,800 Japanese women followed their husbands returning from Japan to Pyongyang, lured by the North's propaganda. Once settled, they were not allowed to leave the Stalinist country.

South Korea's Red Cross Saturday issued a fresh proposal to its North Korean counterpart to set up meetings for families separated by the division of the peninsula. The North has yet to respond.

Intel confirms that Pentium chip flaw can be used to crash computers

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A flaw in microchip giant Intel's Pentium processors can be used to intentionally crash computer systems, a spokesman for the Santa Clara, California-based company confirmed Monday.

"We have determined a new erratum with Pentium and Pentium with MMX technology," spokesman Tom Waldrop said, adding that if a special command is sent to the microprocessors, "it freezes the system."

Industry analysts said the flaw could be used by malicious hackers to bring down individual computers or networks that rely on the Intel technology.

The chips run around 80 per cent of the personal computers (PCs) sold over the last three years or about 200 million machines, according to estimates that Intel has not confirmed.

The problem does not affect Intel's newer Pentium II chip.

To sabotage a computer using the bug, "the processor has to receive a very specific illegal instruction written in machine code, and you have to have a highly privileged access to a system to do so," said Mr. Waldrop.

The command would freeze the PC's system, but saved information and programmes would not be erased, he added.

The problem was first reported Friday by Silicon Valley engineer Robert Collins on his "Intel Secrets" Internet site. Mr. Collins emphasised that the bug could be used as a weapon against specific computer systems.

Intel has been working since Friday with software programmers and hardware makers to find a solution to the flaw, said Mr. Waldrop.

The microprocessor giant had rapidly moved to give consumers software to quash a bug — revealed by Mr. Collins in May — that afflicted its Pentium II chip's ability to handle calculations with large numbers.

And Intel had also modified its production lines to remedy the problem.

A similar flaw in the first Pentium series had cost Intel $475 million to replace the defective chips.

Japanese government panel urges more nuclear reactors — reports

TOKYO (AFP) — A Japanese government panel has called for the country to build 20 nuclear reactors by 2010 to cut emissions of greenhouse gases, reports said late Tuesday.

The panel of ministerial bodies is scheduled to deliver its report on combating greenhouse gas emissions, blamed for trapping the earth's heat, to Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto Friday.

The report is based on the premise that "Japan should reduce its carbon dioxide level to 1990 levels by 2010 and build 20 more nuclear plants", according to the Asahi Evening News which said it had obtained a copy.

The Nihon Keizai Shumbun said the plan to build nuclear plants was aimed at cutting carbon emissions without imposing a tax on carbon dioxide emissions, adding that such a tax was now unlikely to be introduced soon.

Japan already has 50 nuclear reactors in operation, supplying more than 28 per cent of the nation's electricity.

The panel's report is to be delivered just weeks ahead of the United Nations conference on climate change to be hosted by Japan in Kyodo from Dec. 1 to 10.

The conference is aimed at introducing binding targets for cutting greenhouse gases, held responsible for global warming.

Taking 1990 greenhouse gas emissions as a base, Europe is calling for a 15 per cent cut by 2010, Japan for a five per cent cut between 2008 and 2012 and the United States for no change between 2008 and 2012.

But each of the three offers has different bases. The U.S. says its proposal, for example, nuclides six "greenhouse gases" blamed for trapping the Earth's heat while Europe and Japan's include only three.

The Asahi Evening News said the government advisory report calls for:

—Voluntary efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions by citizens and businesses.

—New government policies such as tax incentives to reduce energy consumption.

— Promotion of public transport.

—Tougher laws on the energy efficiency of household electrical appliances.

It said strongest measures in the report include requirements that auto makers increase 1995 fuel efficiency levels by 20 per cent by 2010 and energy saving targets for factories.

The newspaper said motorists would also be urged to avoid leave their cars idling, a common practice in Japan where drivers often leave the engine running to power the air conditioning.

Indian government under fresh attack over Rajiv Gandhi murder probe

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's ruling coalition Wednesday came under fresh attack over the alleged role of one of its partners in the 1991 assassination of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Gandhi's Congress I party and the main opposition Hindu nationalist party told newspapers Wednesday that any attempt to stall a damning preliminary report on the murder would cost the government dear.

"We will not allow the killers of Rajiv Gandhi to go unpunished," Mamata Banerjee, the leader of a Congress faction said, adding that the party ranks would force the leadership to withdraw its crucial support to the government.

Yashwant Sinha, a leader of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) said there would "be serious consequences in parliament" if the report was not tabled in the legislature on schedule.

"The government wants to bury the report because of the problems it could raise," he said.

The 5,280-page report, which took five-and-a-half years to compile, was due to be presented in parliament on Nov. 19 but was leaked to the press.

The report reportedly blamed a regional Tamil party, the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham (DMK), which helped found the United Front coalition and has three cabinet members, of backing Gandhi's killers.

A senior judge heading the probe panel late Tuesday said he had not jumped to conclusions.

"I am satisfied with my report and have all the evidence," Justice Milap Chand Jain told a private television channel.

Gandhi was blown up by a woman suicide bomber in Tamil Nadu on May 21, 1991. India accused the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a Sri Lanka-based Tamil guerrilla group, of the murder. But it has long been believed they were given weapons and funds by Tamils from southern India.

The Times of India newspaper said the Congress' hardening stand could partly be prompted by a desire to return to power after its rout in general elections last year.

"The sanctity of the Gandhi name apart, the attack on the united front might have been aimed at getting the DMK out of the coalition and forcing the prime minister to invite the Congress into the government.

"Rajiv Gandhi's assassination would also make an emotive plank in the event of its present gamble resulting in a mid-term poll," it said.

The Hindustan Times said the accusation against the DMK was an old congress charge and was meaningless until it could "identify individuals ... as having helped the LTTE in its murder spree."

"The congress would do well not to precipitate a crisis by seeking action against the DMK until the nation has on its hands all the facts on not only the Rajiv Gandhi assassination but the entire gamut of LTTE activity in India."

Czechs, Germans fight battle of the buffet

LONDON (R) — A social evening in a sleepy British town turned into a nightmare when German and Czech visitors fought the battle of the buffet, sending tempers flaring and chicken legs flying.

The trouble began when 30 German dignitaries from the town of Homberg were being entertained in their twin town of Bridgwater, southern England, according to newspaper reports Wednesday.

In the next room at the local arts centre was a small party from the Czech Republic celebrating Bridgwater's twinning with their town of Uherske Hradiste.

By mistake, caterers put the food for the Czech party on the same table as that for the German function. The food was divided up but the Czech group's British host claimed the Germans had taken all the best bits.

Humphrey Temporally, deputy leader of Somerset county council, said: "It appeared to me all they (the Czechs) were getting were plates of soggy sandwiches so I walked into the adjoining room to get them a plate of chicken legs and salami. I never made it back."

"I was hit from all sides by people from the German reception."

He said he used to play rugby at school but he had "never been tackled so hard as when I tried to make my way back with the food."

His Czech allies weighed in to rescue him but the Germans rallied under former British police Officer Phil Smeed to repel further assaults.

Mr. Smeed said he was appalled by Mr. Temperley's behaviour, adding: "I was hit by a shower of flying chicken legs as I went to investigate the rumpus. "It was absolutely extraordinary behaviour. Several people were in shock, including a German lady who was hit in the face by a plate of chicken legs," the daily Mail quoted Mr. Smeed as saying.

The Germans eventually locked themselves in a room with their food, the paper added.

Air Canada denies charges of discrimination

MONTREAL (AFP) — Air Canada Tuesday strongly denied allegations it had conducted training sessions for prospective flight crews only in English — violating Canadian law requiring both French and English to be used.

"All our instructors are perfectly bilingual (in English and French) and shift from one language to the other during the course," said Air Canada spokeswoman Nicole Couture-Simard.

Training material is also available in English and French, she said, and students have the choice of taking their exams in either language.

Last week, French job candidates filed a formal complaint before the Canadian Commission for Official Languages, charging the airline with violating their language rights.

Ms. Couture-Simard said Air Canada earlier offered separate courses in English and French. Separate courses are no longer offered because of insufficient demand from Francophone trainees and because the company expects all candidates to be bilingual, she added.

Li tells Japan to stay out of any Taiwan row

TOKYO (R) — Chinese Premier Li Peng told Japanese parliamentarians Wednesday that Tokyo should stay out of a possible quarrel between China and Taiwan.

But Mr. Li's stern advice on Taiwan was the only hiccup in a visit by the prime minister that is shaping up as one of the most cordial China-Japan meetings of recent times.

On the second day of a six day visit, Mr. Li also met Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko and held talks with leaders of Japanese political parties.

In a sign of how the diplomatic competition is hotting up in east Asia, while Mr. Li was making his rounds, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov and U.S. deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott were holding their own talks with Japanese officials as well as meeting each other.

Summit meetings in the past few weeks between China and the United States, China and Russia and Russia and Japan are behind the flurry of diplomatic activity in Tokyo.

Mr. Li delivered his warning on Taiwan in a meeting with Takako Doi, head of Japan's Social Democratic Party.

Party officials said Mr. Li raised the issue in a discussion about new guidelines for U.S.-Japan military cooperation, which have irritated China because they do not specify a geographical limit as in the past when operations were confined to direct threats to Japan.

"I did not receive a firm verbal commitment from Prime Minister (Ryutaro) Hashimoto that Taiwan was out of the picture (in the guidelines)," the officials quoted Mr. Li as saying.

China says the new agreement leaves room for Japan to interfere in a possible conflict between China and Taiwan across the Taiwan strait. China considers Taiwan a breakaway province.

Mr. Doi did not directly reply to Mr. Li's comment about Taiwan.

"The peace and stability of Asia depend on stability on the Korean peninsula," the officials quoted Mr. Doi as telling the Chinese premier.

Mr. Doi's social democrats are in a loose alliance in parliament with Hashimoto's ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

Mr. Li also met five former Japanese prime ministers as well as Ichiro Ozawa, head of the main opposition Party Shinshinto (the New Frontier Party), and Naoto Kan, leader of the Democratic Party, the other main opposition party.

Ex-premier Yasuhiro Nakasone suggested to Mr. Li a four-power summit meeting between China, Japan, the United States and Russia, so they could clear the air in the shifting alliances that are in progress because of the spate of recent summits.

Mr. Nakasone aides said Mr. Li seemed interested in the idea and proposed Japan and China should study establishing a joint committee to see if a four-power summit was possible.

China's official Xinhua news agency said Mr. Li told the Japanese political leaders Beijing wanted to pursue its policy of developing friendly relations with Japan.

"He (Li) said that it is more important than ever for China and Japan, both important nations in the region, to establish and develop long-term and good neighbourly ties oriented to the 21st century when the world is moving rapidly toward multipolarisation and Asia's status is becoming more prominent," Xinhua said.



French President Jacques Chirac (right) chats with General Vo Nguyen Giap during his visit to Hanoi's Museum of Ethnology. General Giap, 85, defeated French troops during the 1954 Dien Bien Phu Battle. Chirac is in Hanoi for a two-day official visit ahead of the French-speaking countries' summit (AFP photo)

Mexican writer personally denies death reports

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — Ailing Nobel Prize-winning author Octavio Paz told the Mexican television news programme 24 Horas Tuesday that reports of his demise were premature.

Local radio and Mexican government officials had announced that Mr. Paz, 83, had died at the Military Hospital here following treatment for prostate cancer. He had undergone treatment for cancer this year.

Mr. Paz told the Televisa network that he was "feeling better" while still suffering from a long illness.

"Fortunately I have good friends who make it bearable and much easier," he said.

Mr. Paz is best known in the English-speaking world for his "Labyrinth of Solitude," an explanation of Mexico's character based on the metaphor of the nation being founded by Spanish conquerors and by defeated, betrayed Indians.

He won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1990.

French president calls on Vietnam to be 'gateway' to Asia

HANOI (AFP) — France Wednesday urged the Communist leadership here to push forward with economic reforms and release about 40 political prisoners, as the two countries signed more than $700 million in deals.

The contracts were signed on the first day of a state visit by President Jacques Chirac.

It will almost double France's approved investment in Vietnam to more than $1.58 billion, French sources said.

Mr. Chirac earlier paid tribute to the efforts made so far to open up Vietnam's economy since the launch of economic reforms 10 years ago, describing it as "a natural gateway to Asia" for France.

But addressing a luncheon of French and Vietnamese business leaders, he acknowledged the frustrations experienced by many foreign investors here who find themselves mired in a web of bureaucracy.

He said he had passed on to Vietnamese leaders "the wishes and concerns that many of you have voiced to me" and urged them "to simplify the working conditions for firms which want to set up here."

But he said he had stressed in talks with President Tran Duc Luong "the importance of a clear, stable legal framework and simpler, swifter procedures."

He was echoing comments heard many times in past months from visiting foreign delegations, disappointed by the lack of progress since the launch of the economic reforms.

France is the top European exporter to its former colony and two-way trade last year reached about $950 million. It is also the largest European investor in Vietnam with total approved investments worth $870 million before Wednesday's signing ceremony.

The three contracts included a $470 million business cooperative contract between France Telecom and Vietnam Posts and Telecommunications Department for the phased installation of 540,000 telephone lines in Ho Chi Minh City.

A second project worth $130 million was signed by FCB, a subsidiary of Five Lilles, for a 1.4-million-tonne-per-year extension to its cement plant.

And an investment licence worth $110 million was awarded to Suez-Lyonnaise des Eaux to produce water in Ho Chi Minh City.

Mr. Chirac also raised the issue of human rights in his talks with the newly-elected president, before meeting with Communist Party Secretary General Do Muoi.

His efforts were mirrored by French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine who called on Vietnam to release some 40 political prisoners in talks with his counterpart Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam, French officials said.

Acting on Mr. Chirac's request, he presented the Vietnamese minister with "a list of political prisoners for whom we are hoping for clemency," one official said here. Earlier, a French source said there were 40 names on the list.

Hanoi has been the target of regular criticism from abroad for its intransigent stand towards political or religious dissent, and angrily dismisses any charges of human rights abuses.

Mr. Chirac's two-day state visit comes ahead of the opening Friday of the first Francophone summit to be held in Asia.

France has retained its historic links with Vietnam, since its forces were defeated in 1954 ending nearly a century of French dominance.

In 1993 President Francois Mitterrand was the first Western head of state to visit after the Vietnam war, on a mission to reintegrate the country — then a pariah after nearly a decade of occupation in Cambodia — back into the world community.

Thursday, Mr. Chirac will travel to the southern economic metropolis, Ho Chi Minh City, where he will meet the French business community.

In advance of the Francophone summit, security has been beefed up at the airport and in hotels, where the Interior Ministry has been working closely with management and Francophone embassies.

Some 75 million francs ($12.5 million) has been spent by France on summit preparations, including a new international conference centre.

'Tiananmen student activist rearrested'

BEIJING (AFP) — Chen Wei, a student activist during the 1989 Tiananmen Square pro-democracy movement, has been rearrested after trying to flee police "harassment" in Sichuan province, Human Rights in China (HRIC) said in a fax seen here Wednesday.

The dissident, who served a one-year sentence immediately after the government crushed the movement, was released most recently six months ago, following a five-year term for "counter-revolutionary propaganda and incitement," the New York-based rights watchdog said.

"Since his release in May, he had been unable to find work because of frequent police harassment and interference," it said.

As a result, Mr. Chen decided to flee his southwestern hometown of Suining for Beijing — where he had studied at Industrial Science University — on Oct. 25, it said without citing sources.

His mother learned on Nov. 10 that he had been forcibly returned to Suining and was being held in a detention centre for "disturbing public security," it said.

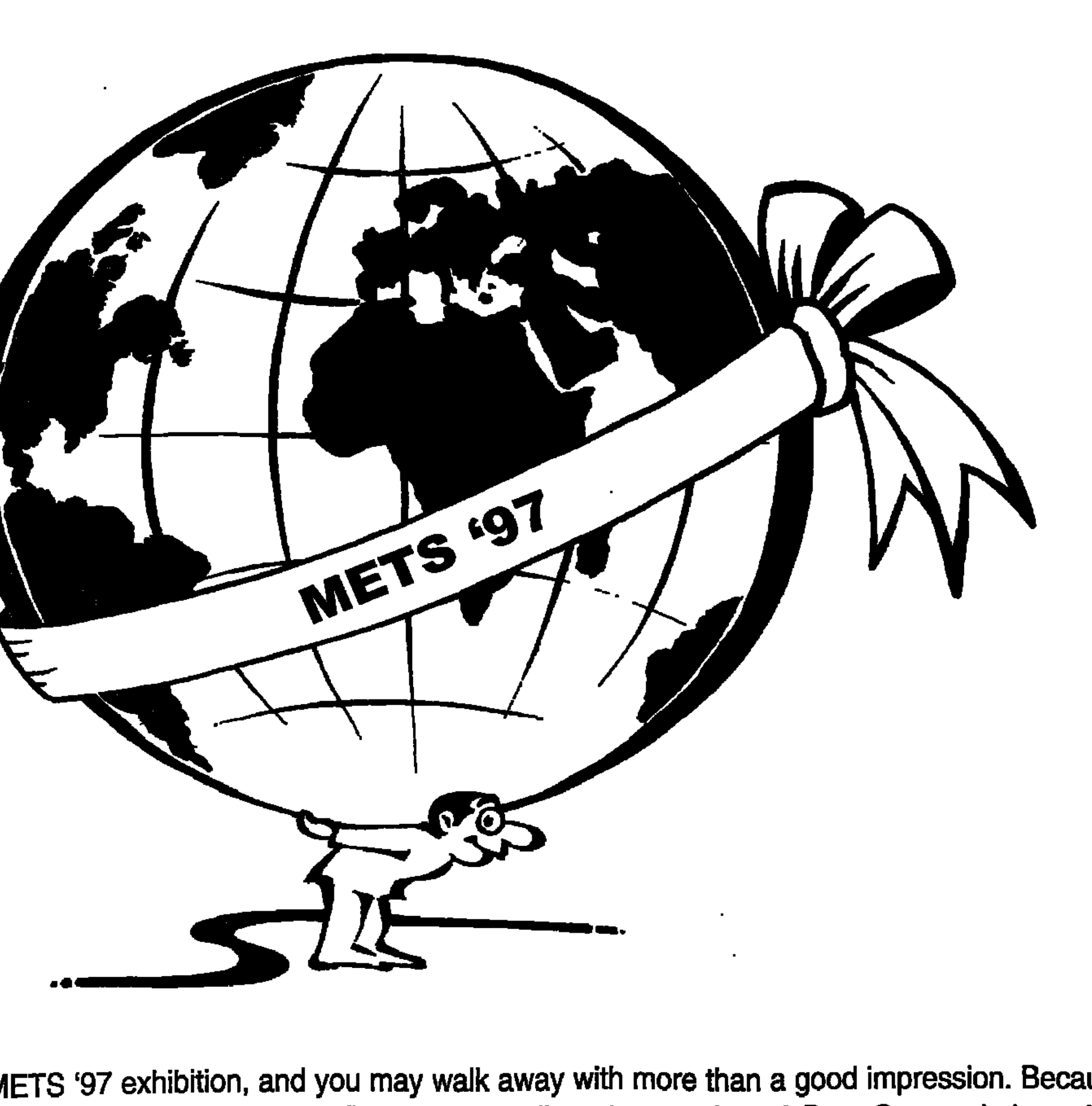
"Human Rights in China condemns the Chinese government for all the injustices it inflicts on released dissidents," said the statement, signed by HRIC chairman Liu Qing, an exiled dissident.

"The government always puts social stability and the right of subsistence above all other rights. Why then do dissidents leaving prison have no right to make a living?

"We demand that the government at least give just-released dissidents a chance to work and to live a normal life," it said.

Released dissidents in China are often placed under tight travel restrictions requiring them to request police permission before leaving their city of residence. The statement did not, however, specify whether Mr. Chen left Suining in violation of such restrictions.

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Spirit of peace lives on

THE MESSAGE of HRH Crown Prince Hassan to Israel on the occasion of the second anniversary of the assassination of the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was meant to drive home a broader and a more enlightened perception of peace in the Middle East than the Netanyahu government has been able to fathom so far. For starters, the Regent served a clear notice in his televised address to all Israelis that the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, as momentous as it is, cannot be viewed in isolation from the rest of the unfinished tracks in the peace process. The Prince called on Israel to view the bilateral treaty between Jordan and Israel as but a piece of the broader picture that should include the just resolution of the Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese tracks and the conclusion of peace treaties between Israel and the three remaining Arab parties.

There is a clear signal in this timely reminder: Israel should not rest assured with only the Egyptian and Jordanian treaties but must strive to attain comprehensive peace with the rest of the Arab parties. Otherwise, the strains and stresses emanating from the unfinished peace negotiations can tax the existing treaties to an unbearable level and jeopardise the overall peace regime in the region.

Peace, the Crown Prince said, must not be viewed as the mere absence of armed conflict. Rather it must be perceived as a holistic phenomenon that comprises a more enlightened definition of security and cooperation. Security, he stressed, means the strengthening of democratic institutions, preserving the environment and improving the quality of life for all the peoples of the region. In other words, security that is based solely on a conventional and limited foundation cannot be appropriate for the requirements of multi-dimensional security that the region urgently needs.

In the same context, the Prince voiced his concern about the growing trend to establish exclusive alliances which could instill fears and anxieties instead of promoting lasting peace and stability. An inclusive form of alliances should therefore be the aim and objective of the countries of the region if they genuinely strive for permanent peace.

The assassination of Prime Minister Rabin was indeed a shock for all the governments and peoples who began to believe that peace in the Middle East is irreversible. Terror struck and took the life of a man exactly at a time when the region needed his leadership and his vision most. Had Rabin survived, it would have been a different story for peace today. Alas, the bullets that mortally wounded him also dealt a serious blow to the negotiation process. But peace is a cause that cannot be given up on, regardless of the struggle, the pain that all of us have had to go through. This is in essence, the message that the Crown Prince sought to send to the Israeli people at such an occasion as the commemoration of Rabin's death.

That 200,000 Israelis went out to the streets of Te' Aviv to mark the occasion is testimony to the fact that, despite the major hurdles facing it, the spirit of peace lives on. Jordan's message can't possibly be lost on those Israelis and the many others who think and feel like them.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Dustour daily commented on the situation in Iraq saying the U.S. is no doubt preparing to launch yet another aggression on the Iraqi people under the pretext that it is protecting international legitimacy. At the same time, Washington is seeking to tighten the sanctions on Iraq and is doing all it can to rally the other nations behind it in this respect, said the paper. But by doing all this the U.S. is only exacerbating the plight of the Iraqi women and children; and if it launches military attacks, it will further show the world its brutal face, and prove once again that it has no credibility and is seeking to achieve its own selfish interests and those of the Jewish state, charged the paper. For this reason, Iraq's stand is backed by the Arab masses who reject America's continued starvation of the Iraqi people and its humiliation of the Arab Nation at large, according to the paper. It said the U.S. should realise that any attack on Iraq will be considered an aggression on all Arabs. It added that while the U.S. continues to extend all support to Israel's aggression on the Arabs and its occupation of Arab lands, it is seeking all excuses to strike at the Arab countries.

Al Ra'i's Munes Razzaz called on Syria and Jordan to join hands and pool their potentials in endeavours to regain Arab rights and secure Israel's implementation of U.N. resolutions concerning the occupied Arab lands. Razzaz said that in the face of Israel's arrogance and its disregard of Arab rights, individual Arab countries find themselves helpless and unable to bring about the aspired peace in the region, but together they are sure to achieve what seems impossible. Since the start of the Madrid conference Syria did not count much on Israel's compliance with the U.N. resolutions; and its dealings with, and its policies towards the on-again, off-again negotiation sessions with the Israelis reflected that stand, said Razzaz. He said Syria also did not take rash steps towards normalisation with Israel despite U.S. pressure. For this stand Damascus has drawn admiration and backing from the Arab masses, said Razzaz. It is necessary for Jordan and Syria, the writer said, to work together not only because Syria holds stronger cards in its dealings with Israel but also because together, the two neighbours can take joint steps to counter Netanyahu's present intransigent stand.

View from Academia

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

The need for some outstanding public schools

THE OTHER day, a friend of mine and I were reminiscing about the "good old days" of public-school education. We were talking, in particular, about the sixties and seventies, a time when there was, not just in Amman but in almost all Jordanian cities and towns, public schools of outstanding quality (there were even some real big names).

Whenever people reminisce, of course, they tend to romanticise things a bit, painting a brighter picture than the picture really was. No matter, the fact remains that not long ago (a couple of decades) we had a number of good, very good, and excellent public schools which, despite their undeniable shortcomings and failings (i.e., in comparison with what we have come to realise now), offered solid education to large portions of the public.

Today, as we all know, the quality of public-school education (due to the sharp deterioration of the overall educational process) is far from what we wish it to be. As a result, most of the outstanding public schools, if not all, have lost the excellent, prestigious status which they once occupied. In fact, there is hardly any distinction or excellence in public-school education — except, that is, the distinguished work of some individual teachers, individual school administrators and individual supervisors.

The picture is not entirely grim, though, for the same period which witnessed the overall decline and fall of our system of public education witnessed a noticeable rise in the quality of private-school education. There are today a good number of private schools, many of which have started to make a name for themselves, which offer excellent education to a growing studentry.

Nevertheless, public schools continue (despite the noticeable increase in the number of private schools in recent years) to far outnumber private schools. The great majority of our students continue to seek education at public schools, and the situation will remain so for a long time to come. Private schooling cannot, at least in the foreseeable future, replace public schooling. For this reason alone, we need to devote greater attention to the upgrading of the quality of the latter than we do at this point.

But there are other reasons. Take quality, for example. In recent years, quality in education has come to mean "overall quality," and not quality of some individuals or even a significant minority of them. Quality and elitism are two different things; when we talk about quality we are taking about, at least, a comfortable majority.

In addition, the public-school experience is different from that of the private-school experience, a difference (due to several economic, cultural, philosophic, etc. factors) which, in my opinion, is healthy.

One is aware, of course, that public schooling has acquired an almost pejorative name. But the matter need not be what it is now, and faith and elegance can still be restored to public-school education. There was a time, as prefaced earlier, when we used to be proud of our public schools; of the seriousness that existed, of the commitment on the part of teachers and students towards learning, of the important activities that went on, of the healthy atmosphere, etc.

Yes, we can restore faith and elegance to our public schools, injecting as we embark on this process what we have come to learn about healthy school education over the years and correcting some of the failings that once existed and that still do exist.

Let's, for a start, begin by focusing on the restoration of greatness to some of the schools that were once great. There are, despite the disappointing overall picture, many outstanding teachers, school administrators, and supervisors. Let's give these individuals a chance to contribute to the best of their abilities. Let's spot them, bring them together, attract them to a number of "central" schools and enable them to function effectively. There are enough of them to create a substantial number of excelling central schools in not only all of our governorates but also the major cities and towns. We can begin at the centre and then move towards the outskirts.

We can, I believe, in a short period of time, and building on what we presently have, restore to some of our public schools their distinction and elegance. This is an important first step. Let's give a name and a flavour to many of our nameless and flavourless public schools.

NEMO JUDEX, compromise and the latest Iraq crisis

By Myint Zan

THE STAND-off between the United States and Iraq in the latest crisis has now entered a dangerous phase. Iraq's refusal to allow Americans in the United Nations inspection team investigating Iraq's weapons factories from entering those sites has led to threats, if not sabre rattling, from both sides.

Iraq had claimed that the Americans were "spying" of the United States and that they cannot be considered as "impartial" in their work.

Can one of the cardinal principles of domestic laws be extrapolated and applied in analysing Iraq's claim of the arguable lack of impartiality (not to say "spying") among the Americans in the U.N. inspection team? Such extrapolations are subject, of course, to the usual caveats ("beware") and qualifications, which I will shortly elaborate.

The principle of NEMO JUDEX IN CAUSE SUA "no man (sic) shall be a judge in his own cause" is a cardinal tenet of both common law and civil law as well as other major legal systems including, (but not limited to) Islamic law.

I by no means intend to defend or endorse Saddam Hussein when I write that (subject to qualifications) Iraq's demand that Americans be excluded from any United Nations inspection team can perhaps ("by stretching a bit") be possibly argued under the NEMO JUDEX principle.

After all, the United States was the major initiator of "Operation Desert Storm" which saw Iraq's defeat mainly at the command of the U.S.-led "coalition forces." One could easily retort that Americans working in the U.N. inspection team are working as members of the United Nations under United Nations Security Council resolutions and that their being American nationals would not affect their impartiality.

However the "it was decided by the U.N. Security Council, so it is legal" argument needs to be viewed with some healthy scepticism. U.N. Security Council resolutions, even if they were passed in accordance with the procedures stated in the U.N. Charter, should not be beyond moral or perhaps even legal challenge.

That exactly was what occurred five years ago when Libya in effect mounted a legal challenge before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against a resolution by the U.N. Security Council imposing economic sanctions against it. The sanctions were imposed by the Security Council in 1992 for Libya's refusal to surrender its two nationals accused by the United States and the United Kingdom of masterminding the December 1988 explosion of the Pan Am airplane over the Scottish village of Lockerbie.

The majority of judges of the ICJ in the 1992 decision rejected Libya's challenge of the legality of the particular U.N. Security Council resolution. But they also stated, in effect, that just because a certain resolution was passed by the Security Council did not necessarily mean it always would have the imprimatur of legality or is "unreviewable" by the ICJ.

Yet there is also the additional (and another technical) ground which militates against applying the NEMO JUDEX principle in assessing the Iraqi claims against the Americans in the U.N. team. The U.N. inspection team is by no means a judicial body or has the duty to act judicially. Therefore the NEMO JUDEX principle, at least in a formal sense, would not or should not apply. This thesis is generally in accordance with the common law principle that the dictum of no person being a judge in his or her own cause only applies when a particular judicial institution may be warranted.

It is very clear from the Statute of the ICJ that the court's judges, in deciding cases, owe allegiance only to the ICJ Statute, principles of international law, "justice, equity and good conscience" and not as agents of their national governments. Nevertheless even in the ICJ, in cases involving either the U.S. or indeed the former-Soviet Union, both U.S. and Soviet judges, and for that matter judges from other countries as well, have never significantly departed in their views from those of the official positions taken by their respective governments of which they are nationals.

Yet one more point that could be made against Iraq is that since Iraq had in the past accepted Americans in the U.N. inspection team should it be "stopped" from reversing its previous stand?

As a response to this question, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson had already stated that if Iraq did not budge, the U.S. reserves all options including the use of military force.

The principle and practice of "compromise" seem, to this writer, a plausible way out of the current legal and political imbroglio.

If Iraq does not back down from its current stand regarding the presence of Americans in the U.N. inspection team, the United States might use force against Iraq. If it does, this time, unlike in the coalition that was gathered during the Gulf war, the U.S. almost certainly would not get a majority, but far less unanimous support of the permanent members of the Security Council. Any unilateral American use of force especially if it does not have official U.N. Security Council authorisation, would be dubious or at least arguable of illegality.

It might also be costly inasmuch as such use of force could affect innocent Iraqi civilian lives. Restraint and compromise in the latest Iraq crisis seem desirable on legal, political and humanitarian grounds.

The writer, a lecturer at the University Deakin's School of Law in Victoria, Australia, contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

LETTERS

Perspective on quotas

To the Editor:

AFTER READING the article "Minorities: according equal treatment" by Dr. Waleed Sadi, (Jordan Times Nov. 10, 1997) I have to say that I am confused by Dr. Sadi's analysis.

I am also under the impression that the writer himself is confused as well.

As a Jordanian of Circassian origin, I feel compelled to clarify a few things and put them in their proper perspective.

— The quota seats in Parliament have been allocated to Circassians, Chechens and Christians to ensure the representation of these groups in Parliament as a recognition of their important role and contribution throughout the history of Jordan since even before the founding of the Kingdom. Other groups like the Kurds and Armenians have also played a role in shaping our country, and their right to having quota seats can be addressed when Parliament convenes.

— The next parliament, with its many responsibilities, should not delve into drafting a ludicrous law of who is and who is not a member of a certain group. If the purpose of this law is to let that group and only that group choose its deputies, then the one-person, one-vote law does that already. If voters from outside a certain group choose to vote for the candidate of this group it is because they prefer him/her to their own candidate and see that this candidate is more qualified for the job.

— Above all, the next parliament should consider allocating quota seats for women. It is time to acknowledge the important role of women and quota seats ensure their representation. As it stands now, half of our society is not properly represented in parliament.

— I am very curious to know how Dr. Sadi came up with the figure of 25,000 Circassians in Jordan.

In conclusion, our Parliament should be a cross-sectional representative body of our society in addition to being made up of qualified deputies that represent various political beliefs.

Jordan is a beautiful, strong and tightly knit mosaic of people who are proud of their heritage and culture, on one hand, and who are very proud of being Jordanians under the rule of the Hashemites, on the other.

Amer A. Tash
Amman

Not just a misquote

To the Editor:

I WOULD like to refer to an article "Workshop examines problems with press coverage of U.N. projects, (Jordan Times, Nov. 12, 1997). The article covers the U.N. Workshop of Nov. 10, 1997, which brought together representatives of the Jordanian press and the U.N. community in Jordan.

I have been quoted by the writer of this article, Ahmad Naser, in the third paragraph with a statement I never made to him. The reporter overheard a discussion I held on the sidelines of the conference with a U.N. colleague. The conversation did touch upon my perception that our everyday work at UNIFEM does not easily translate into news, and that the U.N. development agencies could indeed benefit from employing staff charged with the sole task of liaising with the press. However, I was not giving the reporter an interview, nor did he at any point inform me of his intention to write an article about the event, or the discussion which he was witnessing. Therefore, I strongly object to having been quoted by your staff member in this manner, and would like you to clarify to your readers in today's paper that I did not make the statement attributed to my name in Tuesday's paper.

Beatrix Immenkamp
UNIFEM
Amman

No offence taken

To the editor:

AS A Christian, I'm not offended by Pascal Karmy's interesting article (Bob Robertson's letter of Nov. 11 refers to) (Jordan Times, Nov. 10). The Jewish claim to the 'Holy Land' depends on an unsubstantiated legend: The Book of Judges. Few would believe that the Twelve Tribes of Israel had exclusive rights to Palestine, S. Lebanon, S.W. Syria and W. Jordan, and there's no evidence outside the Torah (myth) that they owned or ruled it. They probably occupied it alongside Canaanites, Philistines and others. David and Solomon are supposed to have reconquered this area, but as Kathleen Kenyon found only puny remains of "David's" Jerusalem, with no inscriptions naming such kings, and as none of the great powers of the 10th Century BC mention them, they too must be legendary. Subsequent losses and divisions in Kings hardly support any Jewish claim to the 'Holy Land,' which was certainly lost to them in 587 B.C. Four hundred years later, a small Jewish state did exist, which expanded to cover all the "Twelve Tribes" area for 40 years until Pompey dismantled it in 63 B.C. It seems that Eretz Israel depends on 400 years of myth and 40 years of kingdom. Surely England has a stronger claim to France?

Richard Tanner
Amman

Thanks for noticing

To the Editor:

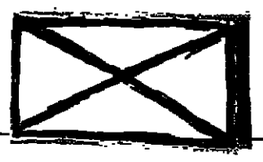
WITH REFERENCE to the two letters from Mrs. Pia Kanaan, Jordan Times Oct. 8, and Rula S. Naffa, Nov. 8, on behalf of the Jordanian Society for the Protection of Animals (affiliated to and funded by the Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad, SPANA London), I would like to thank them both for their kind encouraging remarks. They are right, JSPA does not receive enough publicity. In this part of the world people take top priority and animals come way down the list, although they are part of the planet and the environment.

We still find it incredible after 10 years of existence, that donkeys are considered to be very lowly, yet they work very hard, often extremely overloaded, bringing in water, wood, grain and many other things for their poor owners in order that the latter can survive. Dogs are victims of cruel stone-throwing, and often have their ears cut right off, serving no purpose whatsoever.

Much of the cruelty inflicted is caused by ignorance and poverty. Nobody has previously taught owners how to do anything the correct way, and often they cannot afford proper equipment for simple things such as tethering a donkey for instance. We find many still tied tightly by the leg with nylon cord, telephone cable, wire and barbed wire. Some owners do use head gear, but it is usually crudely put together by wire, and sharp chains which become embedded in soft noses. We provide comfortable webbing headcollars and other items free.

Little thought is given to shade and water in extremely high temperatures, especially in the Jordan Valley where animals can wilt and weaken in the heat. JSPA staff try to educate owners that it is to the benefit of themselves as well as their animals to look after them in a better way. We have an education team which visits schools to teach children about the welfare and care of animals, as we find that the older people are set in their ways and are unwilling to change their ideas.

Our two landrovers go out into the country areas to poor villages and bedouin camps treating donkeys, horses and mules, giving out comfortable equipment (sheep, goats and cattle are the responsibility of the various Departments of Agriculture in all areas). Our two clinics in Wadi Seer west of Amman and in Deir Alla, Jordan Valley, take in sick and injured horses, donkeys and mules which need daily treatment, rest and time to recuperate. All this is free, although we welcome donations of course! Anyone wishing to know more about JSPA can contact us at the address below. It goes without saying that we would welcome more publicity in the media!



Miss Chris Larter
Tel. 865-451, Fax 865452
P.O. Box 141697
Amman 11814

Society on the move

More details on the deputies

THERE ARE a few tidbits from the elections that may not be apparent to the casual observer of last week's parliamentary elections. For those curious enough to continue — check this out: Six deputies retained their seats for the third consecutive elections: Sa'd Havel Srour, Abdul Ra'ouf Ruwabdeh, Samir Kawar, Abdul Karim Dughmi and Bassam Haddadin, and Dr. Mohammad Abu Oleim. Beating them in seat-retention longevity are Drs. Abdullah Akaileh and Fawzi Tueimeh who have been deputies since 1984. A salute, at the very least, is due one outgoing senior deputy. After a straight 40-year track record of representing his constituency in the Lower House, Sheikh Abdul Baqi Jammo lost his bid this time. But there's still 2001. Making comebacks after losing their seats in 1993 were Nawaf Khawaldeh, Amad Ennab, Dr. Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi, Ziad Shweikh and Mansour Seifiddin Murad. The tribe claiming the most winners was the Bani Hassan, originally from the Mafraq region of the Kingdom. Its deputies are Dr. Mohammad Abu Oleim, Abdul Karim Dughmi, Mifleh Zawahreh, Hmoud Khalaileh, Mifleh Ruheimi, Noman Ghweiri and Nawaf Khawaldeh. And the largest fall of incumbents were in the districts of the Central Bedouins, Koura, Northern Jordan Valley, Ajloun, Madaba, Maan and Aquba, as well as Amman's first and fourth districts. These districts brought all new faces to Parliament.

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CONTACT NUMBERS: *Among the customary advertisements placed by winners of last week's elections was a large ad, also thanking her supporters, placed by Toujan Feisal. In it, Ms. Feisal, who lost her seat in Amman's Third District, promised to continue her "struggle for democracy, dignity and the freedom of our country and its citizens. Hers was not the only ad placed in Al Ra'i by unsuccessful candidates expressing appreciation to those who voted for them, but perhaps the only one with a multitude of telephone, mobile phone and facsimile numbers where she can be contacted to voice comments, plaints, etc.*

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HOME OFFICE MOVEMENT: *With changes in the home office of the Foreign Ministry, a few promotions were in store and announced last week. Dr. Khaldoun Talhouni, former director of information, was promoted to director of protocol; Ibrahim Dabbas, former director of the legal department, was promoted to director of information, and Ibrahim Nabulsi was appointed as director of the legal department.*

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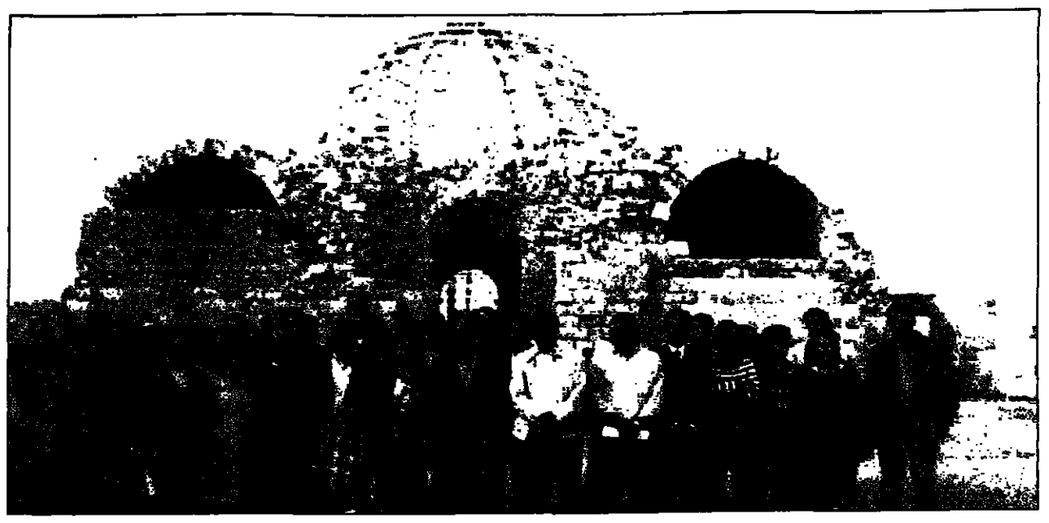
BRUSH UP ON YOUR CATALAN: *Last Friday, while Minister of Tourism Akel Biltaji visited the Amman Citadel to see the progress on the restoration work being conducted at the Umayyad Palace under the supervision of Spanish architect Ignacio Arce, he also met up with a group of visiting Spanish language students from the Instituto Cervantes. Encouraging the students in their studies, Mr. Biltaji commented that the Spanish language today is becoming so widespread that the next president of the United States will have no other choice but to speak Spanish her/himself. He added that his own son will spend the next year in Seville, Spain to learn the language. The work at the Citadel also brought a visit by HRH Crown Prince Hassan yesterday (see pg. 3).*

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STROKES OF LIGHT: *News also from the Instituto Cervantes is that Karak-born artist Khalid Khreis will hold a one-person exhibition of his latest works at the institute. Dr. Khreis, who is also president of the Jordanian Plastic Arts Association, is a graduate of the School of Fine Arts of the University of Barcelona. He is assistant professor of fine arts at the Faculty of Architecture and Arts at the Jordan University for Women. His last exhibition was in Bergen, Norway in 1995. "Khreis' works show the depth and richness of a full artistic background combined with a continuous search for his roots," says HRH Wijdan Ali, president of the Royal Society of Fine Arts. The new exhibition of paintings using acrylic on wood, opens Nov. 17 and runs until Dec. 10.*

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PRIOR TO DEPARTURE: *Two cultural events will precede the departure of Pakistani Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi and his wife Meher. The embassy of Pakistan will first present the works of the father and son team of the Gulgees entitled, "Journeys Within." The father, Gulgee, is one of the most prolific and outstanding living Pakistani painters. His son, Amin, is a graduate of Yale University and works with metal and stone to produce sculptures. The Naqvis and the Gulgees go back a long way and thus the fruition of this exhibition which will be held from Nov. 16 to Dec. 15 at the National Gallery by the Royal Society of Fine Arts under the patronage of HRH Princess Sarvath El Hassan. The second event is a haute couture exhibition entitled simply "Fashions from Pakistan." It is a collection of ladies wear from Pakistani artists which will be displayed at the embassy residence from November 25-27 and inaugurated by HRH Princess Alia Faisal. Ambassador and Mrs. Naqvi will host a farewell reception on Nov. 20. They are scheduled to leave Amman for Islamabad on Dec. 10.*



Spanish language students and their instructors from the Instituto Cervantes in Amman visit the site of the Umayyad Palace at Amman's Citadel last Friday. The reconstructed dome in the foreground is the joint effort of Spanish and Jordanian archaeologists and architects

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LOOKING FOR SABAH: *Planning to arrive in Jordan on bicycle is 68-year-old retired British Royal Army Medical Corps sergeant Peter Redmond, who was stationed in Aqaba back in 1950. His mission is to help raise funds for the National Deaf Children's Society of Great Britain. But he is also looking for a man named Sabah, whom Redmond nursed back to health in 1950 when the then boy of 9 or 10-years old sustained an accidental gunshot wound from a police officer's rifle. Redmond doesn't recall the family name, but hopes to meet up with Sabah again when he is in Jordan from Nov. 30 to December 6. Redmond, who is responding to an appeal by the NDCS for "adventurous people to join the trip of a lifetime across the historical land of Jordan," is theatre director of Cricklade College, a scriptwriter and currently one of the directors of the Andover Festival.*

Jennifer Hamarneh

The end of science fiction

chip talk



By Jean-Claude Elias

SCIENCE FICTION is not what it used to be. From the years before World War II to the late seventies, science fiction books and movies would make us dream of future events, phenomena and technical achievements so extraordinary, so unthinkable that they were very unlikely to happen, even in the distant future. The excitement precisely was generated by these two elements: the "almost" impossible and the remote future. In the past 15 to 20 years electronics and computer technology have made nothing impossible and have brought the future as close to us as tomorrow. What excitement is left? Who would have believed only 15 years ago that we would be able to watch high quality, full-colour, stereo digital movies on our computer's screen? That we would be casually manipulating CD-ROMs holding hundred of millions of information bits? That we would be able to connect our PC via a regular telephone line and instantly explore on the Internet any source of information on earth, with colour photographs and stereo sound? That would have surely sounded like science fiction. Today there is still room for crazy forecast of technological breakthroughs. Except that this time we are ready to believe anything we are told.

Scientists are currently exploring two new fronts to give us computers so powerful that in comparison the best available Pentium we know now would look like an antique slide rule. The first is the use of live molecules to store and process information. Live, biological cells would replace traditional silicon chips. All indicates that in a few years silicon will have reached its physical limits to store information. Unable to squeeze more bits of data in the silicon-based matter researchers are experimenting with live cells. The second front is the production of chips that can redesign themselves automatically. Whereas current processors have predefined functions, FPGA (field-programmable gate array) circuits will be able to modify their own design to suit different tasks. This type of research is already at an advanced stage. The problem is not to make the chip redesign itself anymore, but to make it do it faster. Current FPGAs can change their configuration in one millisecond. Engineers want them to do it ten times faster and expect to reach such performance before the year 2000. What would all this bring to the user? Again, more speed, processing power and storage possibility. Which, practically speaking, will translate into more applications being made possible. *We will reach a stage where PCs will be* permanently operational, like a refrigerator for example. Imagine never switching off your PC. The long-awaited videophone, speaking normally to your computer or asking it to call a doctor for you when you're sick will not only be possible but will become daily routine and will be done perfectly well. Wouldn't it be boring then?

Belarus president says politics no place for wives

MINSK (R) — President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus Wednesday said presidents' wives and children should stay out of their husbands' conduct of affairs.

"Wives have no business in the affairs of state officials," Interfax-West news agency quoted him as saying.

Lukashenko's comments highlighted the gap between his approach and that of Western leaders and President Boris Yeltsin in neighbouring Russia.

As he spoke, U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton was on an official swing through other parts of the former Soviet Union.

Yeltsin has made his daughter Tatyana his official image-maker and his wife Naina often appears at official events.

But Lukashenko, whose country has virtual international pariah status for its *human rights record*, said he did not need "advisers in the form of his wife and children."

When Lukashenko swept to power in 1994, his wife Galina stayed in the north-eastern Mogilyov region of Belarus where her 43-year-old husband ran a collective farm.

His sons Viktor and Dmitry, studying international affairs at Belarus State University, are in Germany getting language practice, Interfax said.

Lukashenko said his older son had told him his brother was "sleeping on a fold-up bed in an average student hostel."

It was "normal" for his former Soviet republic that he did not take his family on official events, he was quoted as saying.

He dismissed as "show" television reports which put wives and children of state leaders in the limelight, noting in particular Raisa, wife of Mikhail Gorbachev.

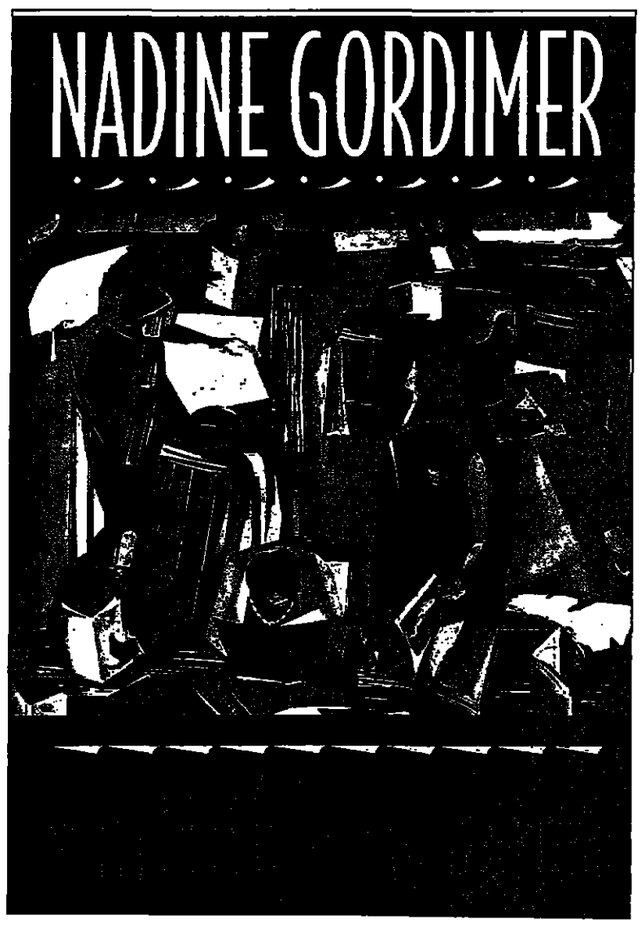
Minsk's relations with the United States have been troubled under Lukashenko, especially *since he used a referendum* win in November to rewrite the constitution in his favour.

Washington says his human rights record is "abysmal."He says he is just trying to maintain stability.

The personal and the political in the nove

BOOK REVIEW

Writing and Being, by Nadine Gordimer
Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995, 145 pages, $10.95



IN THIS book, we encounter the Nobel Prize-winning South African novelist, Nadine Gordimer, as a literary critic. Writing and Being consists of a series of lectures she delivered at Harvard University in 1994. As the title may imply, Gordimer is more concerned with the relation between fiction and reality — the themes, processes and significance of literature — than she is with stylistics.

Gordimer begins by exploring the relation between writing and being on the most basic level: Do writers invent their characters and plots, or simply loot them from their own and other people's lives? While conceding that "no character in fiction, even if conceived as an ape, a beetle, a phantasm, is without connection with real persons experienced by the writer," she stresses the role of the writer's imagination in reworking reality (P.4). To describe this process, she employs a metaphor worthy of her finest fictional writing: "On his or her vision the novelist may receive, from the ethos (others') lives give off, a vapour of the truth condensed, in which, a finger tracing upon a windowpane, the story may be written" (P. 12).

Here the key word is ethos — the characteristics and values of a community. Gordimer is not out to find or invent the most heroic or exotic characters with which to people her novels. She knows that to overcome "the abstract medium of the printed page... a character must always be larger than life, more intense..." (P.6). But her real interest is how humans interact within a group — in the family, among friends or in society at large. Growing up in a place like South Africa, this led her to focus her novels on the connection between the personal and the political aspects of life. This is the focus of Writing and Being, which compares three novels from "the Other World": Naguib Mahfouz's The Cairo Trilogy, Chinua Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah and Amos Oz's Fima.

Inspired by Marcel Proust's advice: "Do not be afraid to go too far, for the truth lies beyond," Gordimer chose these three not only because they link the personal and political, but because they go "too far" in their search "for the Home that is truth, undefined by walls, by borders, by regimes"(P. 69). According to Gordimer, Mahfouz, Achebe and Oz know who they are and where they belong, but their place does not know them. To varying degrees, they have been attacked, because their writings defy the rulers and conventions of their own societies.

Writing and Being is beautifully written, and it is a pleasure to read literary criticism that is itself good literature. The book is also provocative. It challenges post-modernism's tendency to write off reality as only a figment of language. It refuses the idea of literature as a mechanic mirror image of reality, or a vehicle for political dogma. Instead, Gordimer posits commitment to truth and justice in the personal and political realms of the real world as a major literary criterion.

However, Gordimer's putting the three writers on an equal footing as strugglers for justice needs to be qualified. She notes the need felt by the *major characters in* Anthills of the Savannah to connect their own essences with "earth and the earth's people," and comments, "Achebe creates the realisation that to counter the lie in one's society is the final test of connecting that essence, the final test of freedom" (P. 82). In this light, it is hard to see how Oz's novel falls in the same category as Achebe's. Oz deals with the alienation felt by Fima, an Israeli who sees the 1967 occupation as brutal to Palestinians and, more importantly, he says, destructive to Israeli ethos. He dreams of convening the cabinet to decide on unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip as a first step to talks on the West Bank. While Israeli opposition to occupation is admirable, this type of opposition falls far short of the uncompromising honesty and search for justice Gordimer usually advocates.

Gordimer makes no comment on the fact that Oz's story ignores that the 1967 occupation was a repeat of the original 1948 occupation of Palestine. Yet this is to overlook the major lie in Israeli society. It remains a mystery how Israelis can promote freedom, rejuvenate their collective ethos and connect their essences with "the earth and the earth's people," without redressing or even acknowledging the confiscation of earth and eviction of people upon which Israel was built.

Fima's unilateral withdrawal dream was an idea put forward by Rabin during the intifada, in line with the Labour Party's programme for peace by separation. Its consequences are now clear in the implementation of the Oslo accords, whereby a kind of mini-apartheid is being set up, giving less manoeuvrability to Palestinians and more to Israelis. With the building of more settlements, more walls, fences and roads to separate settlers from Palestinians, it is hard to see how this "dream" intersects with Gordimer's idea of a "Home that is truth, undefined by walls, by borders, by regimes." With West Bankers and Gazans being closeted in bantustan-like enclaves, it is strange that Gordimer, who relentlessly opposed apartheid in South Africa, is not more sensitive to these issues.

Gordimer's most recent novel, None to Accompany Me (1995), was being completed at about the same time as she delivered these lectures. The novel deals with the complications of achieving justice in the transition to democracy in South Africa, with many potential parallels to the Palestinian-Israeli situation. Concerning her own experience, Gordimer credits her ability to write to her having moved out of the sheltered white enclave to mix with all the peoples of her country. "I had to be part of the transformation of my place in order for it to know me"(P. 130). Writing was her way of remaking herself as a person who could live in a democratic society for all its citizens. One wishes that she had applied the same criteria when dealing with Palestine/Israel.

By Sally Bland

IMF sees little sign of Israeli economic pick-up

TEL AVIV (R) — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) praised Israeli fiscal policies in an initial report released Wednesday but said it saw little evidence that economic growth would pick up soon.

"The mission's diagnosis of the Israeli economy...is generally positive. This is not because we find in the current situation firm evidence of an imminent reacceleration of growth. It is rather because we see a clear turnaround in policies for the better," the IMF said.

Israel is expected to show growth of only about two per cent this year and the treasury is forecasting only a moderate improvement to about three per cent in 1998.

The report, prepared by an IMF team over the last two weeks, urged the Bank of Israel to pursue a firm monetary policy at least until the end of the year, when parliament is due to pass the 1998 budget and public sector wage negotiations are completed.

"It is desirable...to wait at least until after the Knesset's approval of the draft 1998 budget and the satisfactory confirmation of the results sought in the upcoming wage negotiations before considering interest rate reductions," the report said.

It said monetary policy should be directed towards bringing Israeli inflation to the bottom of its seven to 10 per cent target next year. It urged a target of five to eight per cent in 1998 and four to seven per cent in 2000.

The IMF said it did not believe that the government's fiscal consolidation policy was sufficiently ambitious. It recommended that the treasury seek a balanced budget by 2001, rather than a deficit of 1.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) as now planned.

The deficit this year is targeted to be 2.8 per cent of GDP, which the IMF indicated was likely to be realised, and is slated to go down to 2.4 per cent in 1998.

The IMF said containing the budget was the key element in raising economic growth to the four-to-five per cent rate it said was achievable. It said lower deficits would make more investment capital available for improved labour productivity and "technical progress."

The fund praised the Israeli government's moves to liberalise foreign currency restrictions. Liberalisation, together with the government's first overseas borrowings outside the framework of the U.S. loan-guarantees, "indicates that Israel is coming of age as a full partner in the international financial system."

"Whether the Israeli economy will succeed in reaping the full benefits of globalisation will depend on how well high-tech industries will be able to compete in the international marketplace," it said, "but even more importantly on how well the authorities will be able to compete....(with) trading partners in the arena of economic policy-making."

The IMF said budget restraint would be aided by limiting public sector wage growth to the rate of inflation and further cuts in investment subsidies. It said the state-subsidised pension and health systems threatened to become a drain on public finances.

Jordan, Germany review aid plans

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and Germany Wednesday signed minutes of a meeting under which Germany will give technical and financial aid to Jordan.

The minutes were signed at the Ministry of Planning by the Ministry's Secretary General Nabil Ammari and German Minister of Economic Cooperaion Christian Newman.

On the sidelines of the minutes, the two sides reviewed bilateral economic ties and projects financed by the German government.

According to the ministry's sources, Germany will finance several water, sewerage and argicultural projects.

The coming Jordanian-German meeting will be held next March.

South East Asian economies face rocky 1998 after currency crisis

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Ailing South East Asian economies face a further deceleration in 1998, and a recovery will depend on swift official action on much-needed reform, investment house SocGen-Crosby has warned.

"The massive exchange and interest rate shocks will lower growth, and in every case, growth this year will be lower than last year and the outlook for 1998 is of a further deceleration," it said.

Most Southeast Asian economies have been hit by financial turmoil stemming from a currency crisis sparked by the de facto devaluation of the Thai baht in July.

"The pain will be harsh as the economies face a vicious circle of weak domestic activities leading to income and demand compensation which in turn leads to a further fall in domestic demand," SocGen-Crosby said.

The warning was contained in a report released at a media briefing here by the investment house here.

It forecast a slide in gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate across the region for 1998 from this year.

SoGen-Crosby forecast 1998 GDP growth of 6.4 per cent for Singapore, down from 7.2 per cent this year, and 5.4 per cent for Malaysia from 7.5 per cent.

It predicted negative 1.2 per cent growth for Thailand from 0.8 per cent, 5.0 per cent for Indonesia from 5.5 per cent, and 3.6 per cent for the Philippines from 4.4 per cent.

"Recovery will depend on how fast policy makers can enact vital measures and this will lead to marked differentiation in how they are perceived over the next year," SocGen Crosby said.

Neil Saker, head of regional economic research at SocGen Crosby, noted that Singapore, Indonesia and Hong Kong were the economies that had "better managed systems with the ability to confront new challenges."

Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines however, were considered "losers who are poorly managed and slow to react," he said.

Thailand was experiencing a meltdown, with hardly any credibility in its policies amid an unstable political situation and the collapse of its financial sector, Mr. Saker said.

Thai Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh has announced his resignation but his successor has yet to be named.

The Philippines' economic environment appeared to be "deteriorating," compounded by key tax reforms held up in congress, a high interest rate regime, political risks ahead of presidential elections in May 1998 and the legal backtracking of the supreme court on laws such as the oil deregulation law, Mr. Saker said.

The securities firm also cited banking risks in Malaysia due to excessive lending to speculative sectors and government focus on growth as a priority over stability as factors that would see Malaysia weakening into the next two years.

Mr. Saker said Indonesia would emerge quickly from the slowdown with the right policy response from the authorities, adding that technocrats would ensure the implementation of the reform agenda in that country.

But risks remained in Indonesia, such as the impact of corporate foreign exposure and the drought from the El Nino phenomenon, which could hurt the macroeconomy.

SocGen-Crosby said Singapore's growth would remain robust, led by electronics and chemicals in the manufacturing sector, the lynchpin of the city-state's economy.

It forecast that the Singapore dollar would strengthen to 1.4400 by the end of the year from Thursday's rate of 1.5778.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) An older woman has an excellent idea around breakfast time. If you follow her advice, you can get the funding you need. Later this evening, there is a conflict. Nothing's turning out the way you wanted. Don't despair. Everything's OK by tomorrow afternoon.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You and your partners see things from very different perspectives. You can easily find enough to argue about to stop all forward motion. Don't do that. Instead, have a friendly discussion, in which you discover a workable solution. Relax and get creative.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Even the simplest task will take twice as long as usual. And somebody's leaning on you to get it done by yesterday. Don't freak out. If you can keep from getting scattered, you'll get more done in less time. Just take one through to completion. Then go on to the next.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Even if there are serious matters unresolved, people are more likely to think them over today, instead of acting impetuously. This is better all the way around. Authority figures are in a better mood, too. The anxiety level has simply decreased. It's about time.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Do something nice for your sweetheart this morning, just because he or she asks for it. Later this evening, you'll see a wall of resistance looming ahead again. It's not that you can't do what's required. It's that you don't want to. Postpone it until tomorrow. It'll wait.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You could get quite a bit accomplished today. While you're at it, why not set a goal that's a little further out than you've ever tried before? You've got the support of friends and loved ones. If you have a good partner, you'll do even better. You may even fall in love.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Don't do anything today without thinking it over. A scholarly friend can help. He or she can give you information you need. You have enough money, but not too much. You could have too little pretty easily. You're going to have to stick to a budget. Stop fighting and just do it.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) People can be pretty stubborn sometimes, but you can generally bring them around to your way of thinking. Today, you may notice that your bull-headed friends have some pretty good suggestions. Include them with what you already had in mind, to make your position even stronger.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your work will take two or three times as long as usual. There may be complications with bureaucrats or institutions of higher learning. Expect delays with anything concerning taxes or government agencies. Everyone seems to want information in quadruplicate. Try not to get frustrated. Be patient and persevere so you can prevail.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) This morning is a good time for negotiations. People are in the mood to compromise. Later this evening, there could be a difference of opinion. It looks like it has to do with money. If a loved one wants to spend too much on a frivolous item, intervene.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You know you're right. They know they're right. From your point of view, they're idiots. From their point of view, you don't have a clue. Obviously, a compromise is called for. But you don't have to do it today. You can stay rigid for a while longer, if you want.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You'll be able to concentrate on your work easily this morning. It might even be fun. A journey you're planning is still runing into difficulties, though. It won't happen as soon as you planned, if at all. Don't worry. You're learning a lot from the process.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You could get an opportunity to advance in your career. Pay attention. It will go by quickly, so be prepared to act. Later on this evening, conditions are much better for getting together with friends. The festivities you postponed last night go full force this evening.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You might not want to hear anybody's suggestions today. Others feel the same about you. If you want everyone to agree with you, find an objective you all share. You'll become the natural leader. There it is, right on the tip of your tongue.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) It's enough to make you crazy. You want to get things done quickly, but it's just not happening. You either make mistakes, or somebody changes the rules in the middle of the game. Learn how to take things slow and easy. Remember that story about the tortoise winning the race.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) First thing this morning is best for decision-making. You and your friend can reach an agreement quickly. Don't let a nervous Nellie get you off track. It's also a good morning for romance. It might be difficult to connect, but keep trying. Schedule a double date for dinner.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You'll have hassles to deal with, but you will persevere. You are a strong leader. If you don't speak up, your ideas will not get the recognition they deserve. Go ahead and let people know what you think. It could make a bigger difference than you realise.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Have you been thinking about taking your sweetie on a trip? If so, start planning early. You might not be able to go yet, but you can make the commitment. This morning is an excellent time for that. Do you want to get married? Pop the question early for maximum success.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) If you're most Libras, you want to buy what you want when you want it. When you're with someone who doesn't want you to do that, you feel constrained. If you could learn to stick to a budget, you'd actually have more freedom. That would be a blessing wouldn't it? Don't spend your money on foolish things.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) The moon is in Taurus, a very sensual sign. If you've ever gone out with a Taurus, you know that already. You can have a very wonderful evening without exchanging more than half a dozen words. That will definitely be the case tonight. Choose a secluded setting.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) The workload is intense and you'll have to concentrate to do it right. You hate that. You'd like to run off to frolic with your friends. That'll happen soon enough. Meanwhile, be careful what you say. Your words could be taken out of context and used against you.

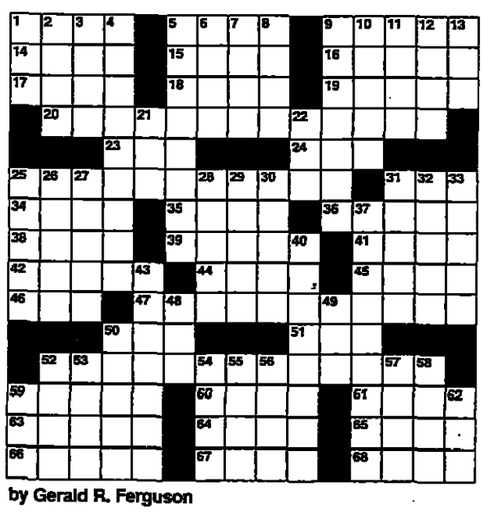
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) A commitment will be most likely to succeed if you make it right around dinnertime. That's your excuse to set a date with someone close to your heart. Talk about plans for the future. You don't have a know how you're going to accomplish them. Things will fall into place.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Today, there will be a lively debate. Lively on your part, anyway. Others may simply stop speaking to you. Some people hide out when faced with overwhelming logic contrary to their established opinion. If you're talking to a brick wall, be gracious. It's worth a try.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) There's been a lot of activity this week, with more to come. Take the opportunity to review your options. If you need to make a big decision, around dinnertime would be best. With advice from an objective associate, you'll make a choice you can live with for years.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

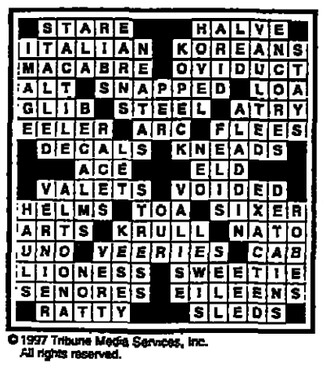
THE Daily Crossword



by Gerald R. Ferguson

ACROSS
1 He played M. Hulot
5 Spiral
9 Call at blackjack
14 Chester Arthur's middle name
15 — facto
16 Lend — (pay heed)
17 Chagall
18 Night light
19 Construction device
20 *Take none of these!*
23 Needlefish
24 Dated
25 It has lots of slots
31 Puma or lynx
34 Jai —
35 Timbuktu's locale
36 Stock unit
38 Remainder
39 Make ashamed
41 Aesir chief
42 Under guidance
44 *Liver secretion*
45 Italian resort
46 Utter
47 Hardly unique
50 Work at
51 Excavated
52 An opinion *offered*
59 What-not item
60 Native American
61 Soon
63 "— of robins..."
64 Immunizing agents
65 *Stubborn one*
66 Artist Edouard
67 Man of the future?
68 Fret

DOWN
1 Cap
2 "There ought to be —"
3 Starch source
4 Disguised
5 Multi-screen theater
6 Store sign
7 "The bird — the wing"
8 Actress Anderson
9 Feathers
10 "The Lady —" (film)
11 *Duck*
12 Operates
13 Before
21 Time period
22 Fishcake ingredient
25 Helen's *abductor*
26 Actress Verdugo
27 Very unpleasant
28 Temple leader
29 Assert one's right to
30 *Altar access*
31 Spanish seaport
32 Take for — (deceive)
33 Dovetail part
37 Three-dimensional pictures
40 *Caps, e.g.*
43 Boxing's Jersey Joe
48 Coloring
49 Pair
50 Self-control
52 Albacore
53 *Small songbird*
54 Loch —
55 Nut bearer
56 Paddy papa
57 Carpenter's accessory
58 Pit
59 Engine part
62 *Original*

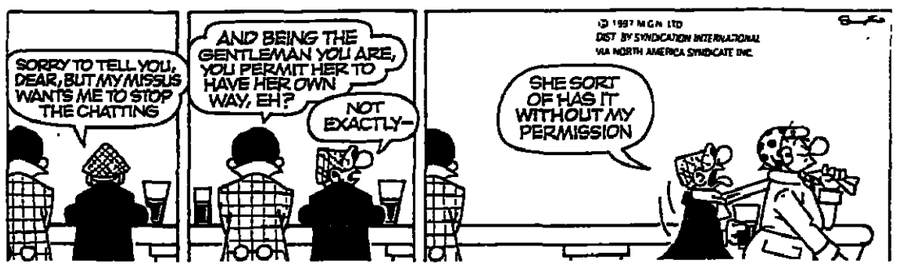


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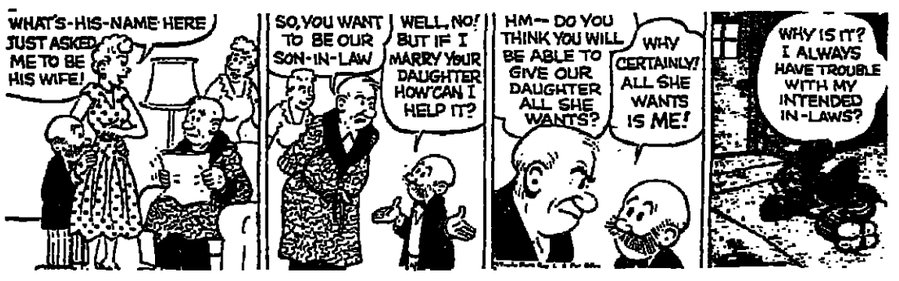
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF®

By Glasbergen



"If I crunch loud enough, I can't hear the commercials and then I don't have to buy products I don't need."

JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

LEEBI

MOBIL

YEASUN

YURSLE

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here : A "□□□□" □□□□

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: PIVOT LISLE SEETHE TAMPER
Answer: The best way to build a staircase with a do-it-yourself kit – STEP BY STEP

Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Government seeking to merge Free Zones Corp. and Industrial Estates Corp.

** THE GOVERNMENT is working on reviving an idea floated in 1986 to merge the Free Zones Corporation (FZC) and the Jordanian Industrial Estates Corporation especially after Jordan joins the World Trade Organisation, FZC Director General Ali Madadha said in a lecture. Noting that the Kingdom is likely to join the organisation by the end of 1998 or early 1999, Mr. Madadha added that step requires reconsidering the legislation structure as well as financial and investment regulations.

Mr. Madadha indicated that many studies and researches are being conducted to rectify the situations and formulate the necessary proposals to come up with new provisions and legislations through which we can keep up with developments. The FZC chief said the corporation's future prospects include allowing more private free zones to be set up especially between the local and foreign private sectors.

The foreign investors, the director general said, should have strong financial capabilities and highly qualified scientific and practical experience to contribute, besides national investments, in various productive sectors. The investors should also help in transferring technology, employing workers and encouraging export-oriented industries and services that contribute to narrow the deficits in the balance of trade and the balance of payments.

The FZC head said it is necessary to specify the policies and the urgent and "daring" measures to face future conditions which will open new scopes for investment and economic development that, as a result, would provide a qualitative jump in the work and future trends of the corporation.

Of the policies and measures, Mr. Madadha mentioned reconsidering all legislations that govern the operations of all public and private free zones in the Kingdom including the FZC law and the regulations pertaining to it. He called on educated and experienced persons from the private sector to participate through forming a joint specialised and technical committee from both the public and private sectors.

He concluded by inviting the private sector to manage/invest in the public warehouses at the free zones instead of the public sector (Al Aswaq).

Middle East bank foundering with the peace process

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — A multi-billion dollar development bank, planned to shore up the Middle East peace process, is foundering with the peace talks and being undermined by the failure of its U.S. backers to find funds.

The Middle East and North Africa Development Bank (MENA Bank) has been at the centre of the series of regional economic conferences that began in Casablanca in 1994 and which continues at the fourth meeting in Doha Sunday.

MENA Bank was planned to bring Arabs and Israelis together at the board table and in regional projects, but the plans have had a checkered history from the outset and the bank's future is unlikely to become clearer in Qatar.

Its supporters, led by the U.S. administration, which has signed up to be the biggest shareholder, claim the region needs the bank to help attract private investment to bolster peace in the Middle East.

But despite its best efforts, the White House has failed to convince Capitol Hill to commit funds to the bank that will have authorised capital of $5 billion, of which $1.25 billion will be paid up.

"Frankly, there hasn't been a great deal of enthusiasm on the Hill," said one Washington official.

The United States is committed to providing $52.5 million each year for five years as part of the bank's capital. But a budget-conscious Congress is on its way to rejecting the request for the second financial year.

The other 19 shareholders, including Japan, Russia and a handful of small European countries, are only expected to follow once the U.S. funds flow.

The faltering peace process has helped undermine support from U.S. legislators and is causing some wavering among the four core regional shareholders — Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians.

There is little motivation to press for an institution where Israelis and Arabs will exchange views as members of the same board when they find it impossible to talk at the peace table.

"We need progress in both these areas before we are in a position to set a date for opening our doors," said David Dunford, coordinator of the seven-strong international team charged with setting up the institution.

Mr. Dunford, a former U.S. ambassador, has had to scale back plans to get the bank operational by the end of this year, but he is still optimistic that the project will go ahead.

"We anticipate a big push by the administration in the next budget cycle" to win funds for the U.S. financial year that starts Oct. 1, 1998, Mr. Dunford told AFP from Cairo where the bank is to be based.

As for the peace talks, he is hopeful that this current "period of despair" will prove just part of a cycle in the peace process.

"There is no such institution in the Middle East, and the region receives less foreign direct investment than any other area of the world," he said. "What this bank hopes to do is to be a catalyser for private investors."

Not everyone agrees. The biggest European countries, already major donors to the region, have opposed the bank from the outset, questioning the need for another institution in the Middle East.

"The problem for the region doesn't seem to be a shortage of cash, but rather a shortage of good projects and a clearly accountable administrative system with proper regulations for investment," said one European official.

"If people came up with good projects in an investment friendly climate, I would be very surprised if getting the money was a problem," he said.

Alongside the World Bank and other multilaterals working in the region, the Arab World has its own institutions, including those owned by oil-rich Gulf states, that dole out funds generously to Arab countries, but not Israel.

European Union warns importers about Israeli goods

From the Jerusalem Post

THE EUROPEAN Union (EU) Tuesday warned importers that any Israeli product may violate free-trade stipulations.

The move is the latest in a series of steps the EU has taken to try to force Israel to open its books regarding the sale of orange juice concentrate that was made from Brazilian oranges, but sold under the free-trade agreement between Israel and the EU.

The EU claims the juice is subject to about $45 million in unpaid taxes.

Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky said he was "surprised" by the EU's decision to issue the statement, which was printed in the Official Journal, widely distributed to European businesses and sent to all European customs services.

In 1993, the EU discovered that Israeli exporters were producing orange juice concentrate using Brazilian orange. Such a move violated the country of origin stipulation that detailed what percentage of finished product must comefrom Israeli-made goods.

The government has failed to open its books, claiming that it is illegal for Israel to make documents available to outside sources. As a result of Israel's bureaucratic foot-dragging, the statement said, the EU now believes that the "validity of all preferential certificates issued by Israel, for all products, (has been) put in doubt.

"Community operators submitting such certificates to receive preferential treatment are informed that they must take the necessary precautions from now on, bearing in mind that, should they prove invalid, such certificates have already engendered or could give rise to a customs debt," the statement said.

If the EU finds Israeli exporters violated trade stipulations, European importers will be required to pay the back taxes on goods they purchased.

The issuance of the warning could result in "no damage or the complete refusal of European importers to purchase Israeli goods," a European diplomat said.

Qatar to launch large Eurobond issue

DUBAI (AFP) — Qatar is preparing a $300 to $500 million Eurobond issue to finance its equity in industrial gas-related projects to be promoted at an international conference, bankers and diplomats said Wednesday.

"The Qataris have plenty of projects, they will have to go to the banks and also to the capital markets," a banker informed of those schemes told AFP.

The industrial projects will be discussed at the Nov. 16-18 Middle East and North Africa economic conference due in Qatar's capital, Doha.

A diplomat informed about the Arab Gulf country's financial schemes said the planned bond issue could be oversubscribed and reach $700 million to a billion dollars.

The borrowing will make Qatar's government the second in the Gulf to tap the international capital markets after Oman, which raised $225 million in a Eurobond issue in March.

Qatar's Ras Laffan Liquefied Natural Gas Company (Rasgas), formed with foreign partners, was the first venture in the Gulf to issue Eurobonds, raising $1.2 billion last January.

The U.S. credit rating agency Moody's Investors Service has given Qatar a Baa2 sovereign rating for bonds and notes, the ninth grade on a scale of 19.

This rating "reflects the economic potential of the country's gas reserves," the third largest after Russia's and Iran's, "along with the risks of the associated debt build-up," Moody's has said.

Qatar's external debt was estimated at $10 billion, or 125 per cent of the GDP, in 1996. But nearly half of this amount has been incurred by the capital intensive gas projects which started to generate revenue this year.

Moody's rating of Rasgas has been A3, because of the involvement of the U.S. company Mobil (Aa2) and the fact that South Korea (A1) is the main customer.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 12/11/97 18:42

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7185	0.5859	1.3960	125.85	1.4084	1682.40	1.9375	5.7575
DE Mark	0.5819	-	0.3408	0.8128	73.21	0.8194	978.31	1.1272	3.3485
GB Sterling	1.7069	2.9315	-	2.3834	214.76	2.4040	2870.17	3.3062	9.8223
CH Franc	0.7163	123.01	0.4192	-	90.13	1.0082	1203.09	138.64	4.1197
JP Yen	0.0079	1.3651	0.4651	1.1084	-	1.1182	13.36	153.75	4.5694
CA Dollar	0.7100	1.2147	0.4149	0.9868	1.12	-	1189.24	1.3690	4.0682
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0210	0.3480	0.0829	1338.51	0.8367	-	11.51	3.4191
NL Guilder	0.5161	88.69	0.3023	72.08	64.96	0.7269	868.47	-	2.9703
FR Franc	0.1737	0.2985	0.1017	24.2535	21.85	0.2447	33.64	33.6400	-

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7505	0.3770	3.6400	0.3031	3.6724	1525.50	3.3910
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	5.2973	0.5324	5.1412	0.4281	5.1870	2154.66	4.7895
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1888	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0808	0.98	406.75	0.9041
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8781	9.9491	-	9.86	0.8039	9.74	4046.74	8.9953
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0833	1.01	419.09	0.9316
Kuwait Dinar	3.2997	2.3362	12.3754	1.2439	12.01	-	12.12	5033.66	0.9316
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0213	0.1026	0.9912	0.0825	-	415.40	0.9234
Lebanese/1000	0,66	0,4641	2.4585	0.2471	2.3861	0.1987	2.4073	-	2.2228
Egyptian	0.2949	0.2088	1.1060	0.1112	1.0734	0.0894	1.0830	449.87	-

Energy

Site	Last	Previous
Brent	19.30	19.27
W. Texa	20.44	20.51
Bonny	19.30	19.27
Dubai	18.85	18.80
UL Gas	194.00	193.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4586	0.15625	0.37248	33.5818
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.46806	0.15957	0.3804	34.2959
KW Dinar	3.2997	5.67215	1.93349	4.61042	415.628
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.56204	1.55448	3.70645	334.113
CY Pound	1.974	3.3939	1.1567	2.757	248.541

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	308	308.5
Silver (oz's)	4.94	4.96
Platinum (oz's)	391.3	393.3
Al (3 Months)	1631	1633
CU (3 Months)	1965	1969
Zinc (3 Months)	1194	1195
Lead (3 Months)	590	591
Ni (3 Months)	6260	8275

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period / Ccy	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year
USD	5.56	5.75	5.81	5.87	5.93
GBP	7.38	7.44	7.56	7.62	7.69
JPY	0.28	0.17	0.23	0.27	0.30
DEM	3.60	3.62	3.80	3.92	4.24
FRF	3.62	3.61	3.79	3.96	4.08
CHF	1.46	1.78	2.03	2.12	2.23
ITL	6.65	6.63	6.32	5.98	5.75

Energy

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	152.5	Spot
Cocoa ($/ton)	1681	Spot
Sugar ($/ton)	304.6	Spot
Wheat ($/ton)	136	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	26.09	Spot
Tea (stg/kg)	156	Spot
Barley ($/bsh)	0	Spot
Rice ($/ton)	400	Spot

*** JOD Cross Rates**

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.2054	1.2114
DE Mark	0.4128	0.4149
CH Franc	0.508	0.5105
FR Franc	0.1232	0.1238
JP Yen	0.5622	0.565
NL Guilder	0.3662	0.368
IT Lira	0.4216	0.4237

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 12/11/1997

	PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
	346.000	245.000	ARAB BANK	15.0	1.23	5	280	91240	325.50	326.00	.50+
N	2.340	1.680	JOR.NATIONAL BK.	E	0.00	37	39573	71218	1.79	1.80	.01+
	2.680	2.150	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	10.5	5.99	18	39350	103912	2.66	2.64	.02-
	5.200	4.600	THE HOUSING BK.	15.1	3.84	1	700	3535	5.05	5.05	-
+S	4.180	2.250	JOR.KUWAIT BANK	11.7	0.00	7	1852	4077	2.25	2.20	.05-
	1.050	.740	JOR.GULF BANK	4.6	6.97	2	1950	1521	.78	.78	-
	4.050	3.430	JOR.ISLAMIC BANK	15.7	3.10	52	50370	196002	3.89	3.87	.02-
	3.900	3.080	JOR.INV.FIN.BANK	24.9	0.00	1	100	388	3.85	3.88	.03+
	1.900	.870	BEIT.AL-MAL (BAITMA)	.6	16.85	4	2150	1903	.89	.89	-
	BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 235.60 %CHG: +0.09			127	136325	473795			
+S	1.740	1.200	ARABIAN SEAS INSUR.	9.1	0.00	1	100	100	1.02	1.00	.02-
	2.020	1.590	JOR FRENCH INSUR.	5.2	8.11	1	10000	18500	1.87	1.85	.02-
	2.580	1.990	JORDAN GULF INSUR.	g	0.00	2	14350	35875	2.50	2.50	-
	INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 116.94 %CHG: -0.20			6	24518	54863			
	2.050	1.550	JOR.ELECTRIC PWR.	9.2	5.26	15	23050	43617	1.89	1.90	.01+
	3.050	2.300	SHIPPING LINES	14.0	5.42	3	1400	3360	2.40	2.40	-
	1.550	.930	MAIL. PORTFOLIO	g	0.00	2	500	574	1.15	1.15	-
	1.740	1.150	MID. EAST HOTELS	19.8	0.00	11	6750	8642	1.27	1.30	.03+
	3.900	2.890	ARAB INTL.INV.EDUC.	9.6	0.00	2	2300	8464	3.68	3.68	-
	1.100	.900	ZARKA EDUCATION	g	0.00	5	3500	3290	.94	.94	-
	2.230	1.630	UNIFIED CO.	8.1	6.47	1	300	510	1.70	1.70	-
	SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 109.44 %CHG: +0.18			39	37800	68457			
	4.450	3.030	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	21.0	3.53	45	169400	526621	3.14	3.12	.02-
	4.140	3.000	JOR.PHOSPHATE MINES	9.7	2.86	6	50100	175350	3.50	3.50	-
	7.050	5.570	ARAB POTASH CO.	15.1	3.08	6	22250	144625	6.50	6.50	-
	11.160	9.070	JOR. PETROL.REFINARY	10.4	8.26	3	300	3228	10.82	10.76	.06-
	1.410	1.050	WOOLEN INDUSTRIES	10.3	8.40	1	200	238	1.14	1.19	.05+
	3.260	1.330	INDUSTRIAL COMM.AGR.	g	0.00	2	541	729	1.38	1.35	.03-
	4.700	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	11.6	4.74	4	337	1420	4.20	4.22	.02+
	1.750	1.020	JOR.PIPES MANFCT.	15.9	6.25	8	1950	2472	1.25	1.28	.03+
	.690	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.9	0.00	13	4860	2284	.47	.47	-
	1.200	.500	INTERMED.PETRO.CHEM.	g	0.00	9	5400	2700	.50	.50	-
	2.970	1.400	UNIV.CHEM.INDS.	12.7	7.09	1	500	705	1.40	1.41	.01+
	3.000	1.860	NATL.CABLE WIRE.MFAC	30.5	0.00	1	100	190	1.86	1.90	.04+
	.890	.530	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	g	0.00	2	1000	600	.59	.60	.01+
	1.670	1.120	ARAB PHARM.CHEM.	16.2	5.51	7	10600	13462	1.26	1.27	.01+
	1.400	.600	KAWTHER INVEST.	61.1	0.00	1	250	155	.63	.62	.02-
+S	1.880	1.080	UNIV. MODN.INDS.	P	.22	8	8100	8029	.98	.98	-
	1.070	.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.3	0.00	47	270100	237840	.87	.89	.02+
	1.330	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.5	0.00	3	1400	1678	1.20	1.19	.01-
	.810	.710	JORDAN STEEL	34.4	6.58	7	10908	8277	.75	.76	.01+
	.840	.570	MID.EAST COMPLEX	7.4	16.67	31	45400	26695	.58	.60	.02+
	INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 117.75 %CHG: -0.10			205	603696	1157295			
	GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 171.06 %CHG: +0.02			377	802339	1754410			

PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 12/11/1997

.630	.300	CENTRAL GEN.STORAGE	g	0.00	1	200	62	.32	.31	.01-
.610	.370	JOR.TRADE FAC.	9.9	0.00	18	23700	8769	.37	.37	-
.800	.660	UNION INV. 50%	g	0.00	17	45927	11471	.74	.75	.01+
.570	.360	ARAB FIN.INVEST.	g	0.00	9	20250	8100	.40	.40	-
N .950	.720	AL-SHARQ INV.CO.	P	0.00	1	8000	6480	.81	.81	-
.780	.610	AL-DAWLIYAH 75%	68.1	0.00	6	17000	7820	.71	.71	-
+ .400	.200	JOR.INDS.MATCH-JEMCO	g	0.00	1	3500	665	.20	.19	.01-
+ .690	.460	ARAB FOOD & MED.	g	0.00	2	1000	451	.46	.45	.01-
.530	.320	ARAB INTL.INV.TRD.	36.9	0.00	3	1000	320	.32	.32	-
+ .640	.340	NATL. TEXTILE	g	0.00	3	450	149	.34	.33	.01-
+ .750	.400	NATL.MULT.ENG.MAMICO	g	0.00	45	179850	70142	.40	.39	.01-
1.400	.860	UNION TOBACCO 75%	g	0.00	2	1500	1485	1.24	1.24	-
.730	.550	RAZI PHARM.	E	0.00	3	1450	914	.63	.63	-
.470	.290	INDS. ENG.	g	0.00	2	1000	300	.21	.30	.01-
+ .860	.640	INDS. CERAMIC	16.3	0.00	4	1878	1164	.64	.62	.02-
.820	.590	NATL. POULTRY	E	0.00	1	1750	1050	.61	.60	.01-
1.050	.720	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	47.3	0.00	1	250	245	1.03	.98	.05-
GRAND TOTAL					119	308705	119586			

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New 4-year NBA TV deal worth $2.5 billion

NEW YORK (AFP) — NBA games, perhaps without Michael Jordan, will continue to be shown on the NBC and Turner television networks, after a four-year deal worth a reported $2.5 billion was announced Tuesday following a league's Board of Governors meeting in New York.

USA Today reported that NBC's annual fees will rise from an average of $187.5 million to approximately $425 million next season, while Turner's will increase from $88 million to about $200 million per year.

Although Jordan is contemplating retirement, possibly as early as the end of this season, that did not stop the networks from paying a 127 per cent increase over the last agreement. The new deal could mean as much as $21.55 million in revenues per team per season.

Current contracts were set to expire at the end of this season, the eighth for NBC and 14th for Turner. The USA Today report said the deals were made during the exclusive one-month window beginning in September that the networks retained as current rights holders.

Under the new agreement, both networks received an increase in telecasts for their money. NBC will air 31 playoff games, up from the current 23, and 32 regular-season games, up from 25. Most of the additional regular-season telecasts will be slotted in early prime time on Sunday night.

"We're excited to extend our relationship with NBC," said NBA commissioner David Stern. "We look forward to four additional years with expanded coverage, particularly with the early prime time exposure on Sunday evenings."

Turner, which splits its NBA coverage between sister stations TNT and TBS, will air as many as 80 regular-season games under the new agreement, up 14 percent from 70 games under the current deal. TNT and TBS will continue to air roughly 40 playoff games each year through the conference finals.

"Turner Broadcasting and Ted Turner have been extraordinary partners with the NBA for 14 years," Stern said. "We are delighted to continue that relationship and bring additional prime time games to our fans on TNT and TBS."

The networks will continue to split coverage of All-Star Weekend and the first three rounds of the playoffs. NBC owns exclusive rights to the NBA Finals.

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Kemp leads Cavaliers to 101-80 win over Bulls

CLEVELAND (AP) — Shawn Kemp scored 21 points and the new-look Cavaliers blew out the struggling Bulls 101-80 Tuesday night, one of Cleveland's most convincing victories over Chicago in the Michael Jordan era.

The Bulls, without the injured Scottie Pippen and with Dennis Rodman still trying to find his form, dropped to 4-3 and remained winless on the road as they seek a sixth NBA title this decade.

The Cavaliers, running and gunning more than the bulls have seen in years, got 36 points from their bench and held Chicago to 37 per cent shooting.

Jordan, coming off a season-low 15 points against New Jersey, had 19 points on 7-for-17 shooting. he could only watch as rookie Derek Anderson threw down a double-pump, Jordan-like dunk to put an exclamation point on the victory.

Rodman played 12 minutes in his second start and did not take a shot or score a point. he had five rebounds and only two minor run-ins with violet Palmer, one of two women referees in the league this season.

Wesley Person had 17 points for the Cavaliers, and rookie Brevin Knight had 10 points and seven assists.

It was Cleveland's largest margin of victory over Chicago since a 22-point win in 1993.

Hawks 89, Sonics 87: In Atlanta, the Hawks improved to 7-0 when Steve Smith hit a turnaround jumper from 16 feet 5 metres with 4.9 seconds remaining.

Gary Payton had a chance to tie for the Sonics, driving into the lane as time was running down, but his left-handed layup hit the rim three times before bouncing out as the horn sounded.

The Sonics were held scoreless after Detlef Schrempf made two free throws with 4:07 left to push his team to an 87-80 lead.

Atlanta finished with a 9-0 run, capped by Smith's basket after Schrempf missed a scoop shot in the lane with 26 seconds remaining.

Smith scored 21 points to lead the Hawks.

Vin Baker led the Sonics with 17 points and Schrempf had 16.

Heat 101, Kings 82: In Miami, Isaac Austin scored 24 points and P.J. Brown grabbed a career-high 18 rebounds for Miami.

Reserve forward Mark Strickland, receiving extra playing time with Jamal Mashburn injured, scored 10 of his career-high 14 points in the first half for the Heat.

Mitch Richmond scored 17 points to lead the Kings. Austin, starting at centre while Alonzo Mourning is out with a left knee injury, scored 8 points during a 22-6 spurt in the second quarter as the Heat opened a 58-39 halftime lead.

Knicks 93, Nuggets 90: In New York, Patrick Ewing scored 28 points, survived a harsh foul in the second quarter and helped New York avoid another fourth-quarter collapse.

The Knicks almost self-destructed in the final quarter for the fourth time this season, but Denver rookie Bobby Jackson lost control of the ball and was unable to get away a 3-pointer before the final buzzer.

Ewing shot 11-for-16 from the field and 6-for-6 from the line with 11 rebounds and two blocks. he was pushed from behind by rookie Tony Battie and went down hard on a breakaway in the second quarter, but survived the flagrant foul with no apparent ill effects.

John Starks added 15 points, all in the first half, and Chris Childs came off the bench to total 12 points and 11 assists for New York.

Bryant Stith, who made several big shots late in the game, led Denver with 18 points. Battie had 16 points and 11 rebounds and Jackson scored 14.

Spurs 93, Timberwolves 92: In Minneapolis, David Robinson tipped in his own missed layup at the buzzer for San Antonio.

Robinson had a season-high 36 points and 16 rebounds as the Spurs improved to 6-1, their best start since 1991-92. Rookie Tim Duncan added a career-best 22 points and nine rebounds for San Antonio, which rallied from a 12-point third-quarter deficit.

All five starters scored in double figures for Minnesota, led by Tom Gugliotta's 22 points. Stephon Marbury scored all 15 of his points in the second half, including a driving jumper that put the Wolves up 92-91 with 2.8 seconds left.

But Robinson, who scored his previous season high of 32 in a win at Toronto on Monday night, got the ball on the baseline after the inbounds pass. He drove for a layup but missed, then tipped the ball in from the other side of the rim.

Lakers 118, Mavericks 96: In Dallas, Shaquille O'Neal scored 25 of his season-high 37 points in the first half as Los Angeles rolled to its fifth consecutive win.

The Lakers' 5-0 start is their best since 1987-88 when they got off to a franchise-best 8-0.

O'Neal, making his third start of the season, dominated Mavericks centre Shawn Bradley in the first half, converting 12 of 16 shots as the Lakers built a 57-43 lead.

The Lakers shot 58 per cent from the field as a team in the opening half and cruised to their 10th straight win over Dallas.

Rick Fox added 16 points and Robert Horry had 14 for the Lakers.

O'Neal added 12 rebounds.

Dennis Scott had 27 points to pace the Mavericks, who lost their third straight following a 3-0 start. Kurt Thomas added 13 points

In Vancouver, British Columbia, Shareef Abdur-Rahim scored 17 of his 29 points in the second half as Vancouver rallied.

Abdur-Rahim's three-point play with 3:44 remaining gave the Grizzlies a 103-101 lead as they came back from a 10-point deficit.

Vancouver, which set franchise records for points at home, rebounds (57) and free-throw attempts (47), has won two straight for the first time this season and for just the sixth time in franchise history.

The Clippers unravelled in the fourth quarter when they made just 7-of-24 field-goal attempts and were outscored 37-21.

Rookie Antonio Daniels scored a season-high 18 points and had 10 assists for the Grizzlies.

Rodney Rogers led the Clippers with 26 points — 20 in the first half on 9-of-12 shooting.



Vancouver Grizzlie's Shareef Abdur-Rahim goes up to shoot over the top of Los Angeles Clippers Lamond Murray (7) and Rodney Rogers (54) during first half NBA action in Vancouver. The Clippers won 119 to 113 (Reuters photo)

RESULTS

Atlanta	89	Seattle	87
Cleveland	101	Chicago	80
Miami	101	Sacramento	82
New York	93	Denver	90
San Antonio	93	Minnesota	92
LA Lakers	118	Dallas	96
Vancouver	119	LA Clippers	113

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Women's Masters places up for grabs

NEW YORK (AFP) — Mary Joe Fernandez of the United States, Spain's Conchita Martinez and French pair Sandrine Testud and Nathalie Tauziat have qualified for the women's Masters here next week, the WTA announced on Tuesday. Nine players — Martina Hingis of Switzerland, Amanda Coetzer (South Africa), Jana Novotna (Czech Republic), Monica Seles (USA), Lindsay Davenport (USA), Iva Majoli (Croatia), Mary Pierce (France), Irina Spirlea (Romania) and Arantxa Sanchez (Spain) were already assured of a berth. But three places remain up for grabs and will not be distributed until after this week's tournament in Philadelphia. The three likeliest recipients are Germany's Anke Huber, Brenda Schultz of the Netherlands and Lisa Raymond of the United States.

FIFA rules out referee mistakes

ZURICH (AFP) — Football's governing body FIFA has ruled that refereeing decisions cannot be overturned by declaring void a German federation move to order a replay after TV footage showed the referee was wrong to award a goal in a Bundesliga match. FIFA said in a statement their Committee for Legal Matters had ruled that all refereeing decisions, especially whether a goal has been scored or not, were final and could not be overturned at a later date by an outside body.

Ukraine World Cup player tests positive

ZURICH (AFP) — Ukraine's Sergey Nagornyak has been suspended after testing positive for drugs during the World Cup qualifier with Croatia at Zagreb on Oct 29. FIFA, the international football federation, said he had used Bromantan, which they classed as a masking agent. FIFA said they had carried out 19 random tests at 640 World Cup qualifying games and this was the first positive case. Croatia won the game 2-0 and Nagornyak will miss the second leg in Kiev on Saturday. Bromantan surfaced at last year's Olympics in Atlanta when two Russian bronze medallists won their appeal against being disqualified for taking the drug. The Russian Olympic Committee said afterwards it would stop using Bromantan as long as there were doubts over why it was used. The International Olympic Committee had described Bromantan as a cocktail of steroids, stimulants and masking agents. The Court accepted Russian arguments that Bromantan was used to strengthen the athletes' immune system, especially for competitions in a hot and humid climate, and not to enhance performance.



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Richard Gere & Julia Roberts ... in
PRETTY WOMAN
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10.30

CINEMA TEL:699238
PLAZA
Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in
AL MASEER (Arabic)
Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:677420
CONCORD
CONCORD "1"
Rowan Atkinson... in
MR. BEAN
Shows:12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30
CONCORD "2"
SLEEP WALKERS
Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only

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ABDOUN
Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in
AL MASEER (Arabic)
Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival
Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30

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HERCULES
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00

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Ukraine World Cup player tests positive

ZURICH (AFP) - Ukraine's Sergei Nagornyak has been provided after testing for five banned substances during a World Cup match at the PF Stadium in the Ukrainian capital Kiev, FIFA announced on Tuesday. Nagornyak, who played in Ukraine's 4-0 World Cup victory over Iran on October 29, tested positive for the substances nandrolone, methandienone, methenolone, stanozolol and testosterone. Nagornyak has denied taking any banned substances and has requested that the B sample be tested. FIFA said the player was provisionally suspended pending the results of the B sample test.

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ATP World Championships

Sampras beats Rusedski in Hanover

HANOVER (AFP) — Holder Pete Sampras ovecame a first-set bout with a bloody nose to earn a 6-4, 7-5 victory against Greg Rusedski on Wednesday, fighting back into trophy contention at the $3.3 million ATP World Championships.

The three-time holder at the end-of-season shootout had to lie down on his bench during a changeover following the ninth game of the opening set while holding a 5-4 lead over Canadian-born Briton Rusedski, when he had a nose bleed.

ATP trainer Doug Spreen treated the 26-year-old Sampras and after five minutes the contest resumed.

Sampras served out the set and carried on without problems. In the second he broke Rusedski as the Briton double-faulted for the eighth time in the match to give Sampras a parir of game-winning points. One was all the American needed for a 6-5 lead.

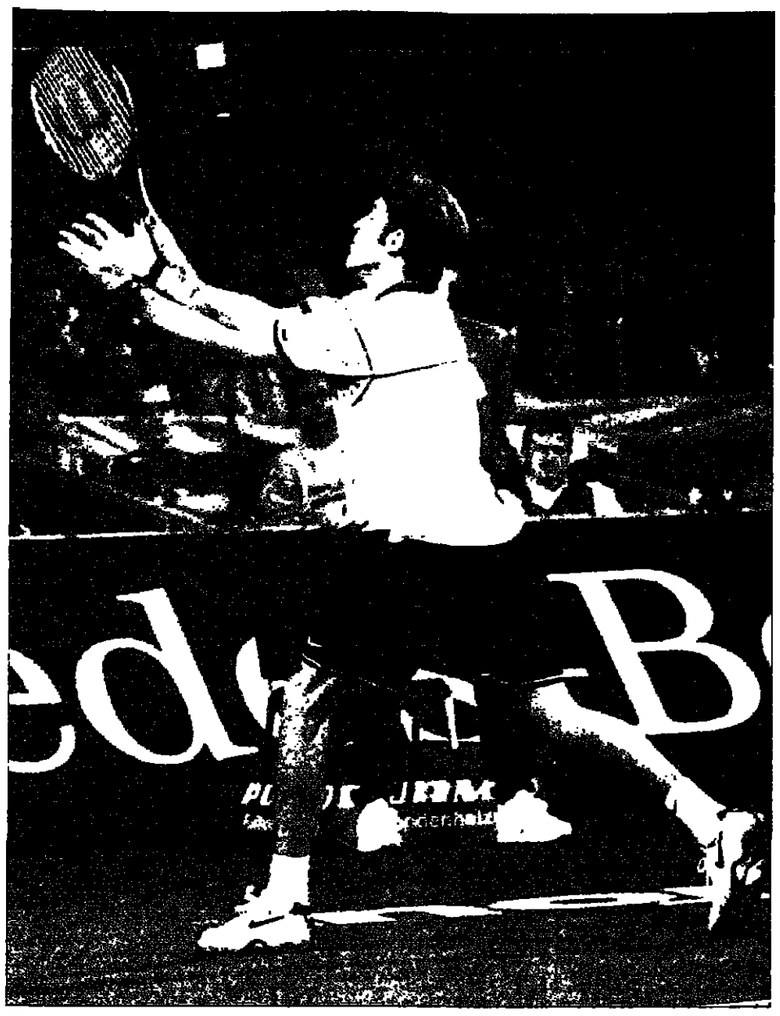
A game later, it was all over after one hour, 16 minutes as Sampras won from Rusedski's backhand into the net.

The victory gives Sampras a 1-1 record in round-robin play in the Red group. He will now await the result of Wednesday night's match between Patrick Rafter and Carlos Moya, both undefeated so far.

Moya beat Sampras on Tuesday in an upset to put the holder in trouble. The win over Rusedski was the sixth for Sampras in the series without a defeat.

In the White group, Yevgeny Kafelnikov was facing Swede Jons Bjorkman.

The top two in each group qualify for Saturday's semi-finals.



Greg Rusedski of the United Kingdom catches his racket during his match against Pete Sampras of the United States at the Tennis World Championships in Hanover, November 12. Rusedski lost the match 6-4, 7-5 (Reuters photo)

Marlins deal Alou to Astros

MIAMI (AP) — The Florida Marlins began the breakup of their World Series Championship team, trading Moises Alou to the Houston Astros on Tuesday.

In exchange, Houston will send Florida Minor-League right-handers Oscar Henriquez and Manuel Barrios and a player to be named.

"Moises Alou obviously is one of the premier players in the game today," Astros general manager Gerry Hunsicker said. "It's unusual that anybody can acquire a player of this magnitude. Adding him to our lineup makes us a force to be reckoned with."

The deal was made just before the deadline for freezing rosters for the Nov. 18 expansion draft.

Florida owner H. Wayne Huizenga plans to sell the Marlins to a group headed by team President Don Smiley, and the two have vowed to cut the payroll to below $20 million next season, virtually assuring florida will become a low-drawing non-contender.

Alou is to be paid $5 million in each of the next two seasons and $5.25 million in each of the 2000 and 2001 seasons.

The deal is especially unusual because the bullpen has been florida's strength.

"I don't know what their thinking was. All I know is they got a couple of good arms," Hunsicker said. "Oscar Henriquez could be a force at the Major-League level next season and Manuel Barrios may not be far behind."



World Boxing Council (WBC) flyweight interim champion Chatchai Sasakul (R) of Thailand raises his arms as Russian champion Yuri Arbachakov returns to his corner after the final round of their scheduled 12-round title unification bout in Sapporo, northern Japan November 12. Chatchai dethroned Arbachakov with an unanimous decision. Chatchai had become the interim champion in May while Arbachakov was taking a 14-month break to nurse a broken hand (Reuters photo)

Patient Chang ready to wait

HANOVER, (AFP) — Americans may hold down the top two places in tennis, but World No. 2 Michael Chang knows that the glory days may soon be over for North America.

The Chinese-American did his bit to keep the teetering dynasty on its feet, winning a White group round-robin match 7-6, 6-2 over Spain's Sergi Bruguera to advance at the $3.3 million ATP World Championship on Tuesday night.

But though Chang scraped through with a win, World No. 1 compatriot Pete Sampras took an opening loss to Spain's Carlos Moya.

Chang and Sampras are the only two Americans anywhere near the top of the game. The next player down is No. 21 Jim Courier, a former World No. 1 whose best form seems to be behind him by five years.

Those three, plus 49th-ranked Jeff Tarango, are the only Yanks in the Top 50, with six more compatriots sitting on ranking positions between 74 (Richey Reneberg) and 96 (Alex O'Brien).

Former Sampras rival Andre Agassi has sunk to 141st on the ATP Tour computer, with American media making a big story out of the fact that the game's biggest personality managed to win a first-round match at a lower-level Challenger event this week against No. 144 Australian Michael Tebbutt in Las Vegas.



Sergi Bruguera of Spain returns the ball from Michael Chang of the United States at the Tennis World Championships. The final match will take place on November 16 (Reuters photo)

The current sluggish American tennis seems like hanging on for the immediate future.

"It's something that's always going to take time," said Chang, who had a day off Wednesday at Hanover.

"In any country, in any part of the world, it takes time to nurture talent.

"America is no exception to that."

Chang, at 25, came through with the Sampras-Agassi-Courier generation, which matured and dominated during the early part of the decade. He is playing at the year-end championships for the sixth time, second only to Sampras with eight appearances.

Now, with the likes of Australian Patrick Rafter, Swede Jonas Bjorkman and even Caandian-born Brit Greg Rusedski sitting inside the Top 5 rankings, the picture is changing.

"Our class of (American) players was extremely talented," said Chang. "I don't know if you're ever going to get a group this talented for many years to come."

But he added with patient optimism: "There will definitely be more talent popping up in the next five to 10 years."

That leisurely timespan is a lifetime in tennis and doesn't bode well for the Americans in the short-term.

With the Germans concentrating on fresh faces like Nicolas Kiefer and Tommy Haas to replace the departing Boris Becker and the retired Michael Stich, and with Spain and Sweden never short of competitors, it might be a long dry spell for the land which produced Connors and McEnroe.

The only moderate *prospect of the moment is* Justin Gimelstob, a big-hitting, 21-year-old whose successes have been few.

His ranking of 83rd in the world shows how far he has to go to catch his peers like Moya (ranked seventh), Russia Yevgeny Kafelnikov (sixth) and No. 10 Marcelo Rios of Chile.

Besides looking to the future, Chang also has the present to worry about.

One slip this week in Hanover will give red-hot Rafter a fighting chance at displacing Chang from World No. 2. Rafter trails by just 26 ranking points and given the results of round-robin this week, would move ahead if he carries on winning at the season-ending event.

"It's more important to come out here and try to play my best tennis. The ranking stuff will really be secondary," said Chang. "I'm sure that Pat is thinking about winning this event. I'm thinking about taking it match-by-match and also hopefully winning."

Lewis urges athletes to ignore call for Sydney Games boycott

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Nine-time Olympic gold medallist Carl Lewis Wednesday urged Australia's 400-metre world champion Cathy Freeman to ignore calls for her and other indigenous Australians to boycott the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Lewis, who was involved in the U.S. boycott of the 1980 Moscow Games and the tit-for-tat boycott of the Soviet bloc of the 1984 Los Angeles Games, said he had not seen evidence of benefits from boycotting.

"In the U.S. we watched the Olympics in 1980. People went and competed, won their meduls and went home.

"Had we been there we could have spoken out against it. Just being there makes a difference, being seen."

Freeman, who sat quietly as Lewis gave his views, said she would take his advice into account.

"I have a lot of respect for the great Carl Lewis and naturally, I will take heed," she said. She had indicated earlier she was not prepared to talk about the boycott call.

Aboriginal elders' called last week for Freeman to boycott the Sydney Games, the first Olympics *in the southern hemisphere* since Melbourne in 1956.

Aboriginal elders said high profile indigenous Australian athletes, Freeman and high hurdler Kyle Vander-Kuyp, should not run at the Games to protest against the Australian government's stance on native title.

Lewis was caught in the controversy when in Melbourne to promote February's Melbourne-Sydney grand prix athletics meets, where Canada's Olympic Games 100m champion Donovan Bailey will head a field of 33 top overseas and Australian athletes.

Bailey and American Marion Jones, who won the 100 metre gold medal at the Athens World Championships this year, will compete at the two main grand prix competitions — in Melbourne on February 25 and in Sydney three days later.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH

TERENCE REESE (1913-1996)

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠1073
♡A64
◇K932
♣A103

WEST
♠J9865
♡Q10873
◇Void
♣975

EAST
♠Q2
♡KJ95
◇J76
♣QJ82

SOUTH
♠AK4
♡2
◇AQ10854
♣K64

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1◇	Pass	3◇	Pass
3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♠	Pass	4♡	Pass
6◇	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: Seven of ♡

Terence Reese, regarded by many as the world's greatest player/writer, died at his home in London at the end of January. One of the originators of the Acol System, he was the mainstay of powerful British teams, including the 1965 World Champion squad. His career was cut short when, during the 1965 Bermuda Bowl competition, he and his partner, Boris Schapiro, were accused of signalling the length of their heart holdings. Barred by the World *Bridge Federation, an independent* judicial inquiry found there was insufficient evidence to support the charges.

This hand, from the 1964 World Bridge Olympiad qualifying round match between Britain and Switzerland, appeals to us for its beauty and symmetry. The British North-South pair had languished in three no trump, making 11 tricks. Jaime Ortiz-Patino (North) and Pietro Bernasconi had, thanks to the mirror distribution in the black suits, reached an ambitious six-diamond contract on the auction shown.

To make the slam once hearts had been cleared and trumps were drawn, declarer had to try to strip a defender of one black suit, then throw him in with the other to force a ruff-and-sluff.

The opening lead was won in dummy and a heart was ruffed. Trumps were drawn in three rounds, ending on the table, and another heart was ruffed. Declarer cashed the king of spades, and Reese dropped the queen! Next, declarer tried the king of clubs — another queen from East. When Reese followed to the ace of clubs with the deuce, declarer continued with a third club. *East won but was* able to exit with a spade — down one since West's jack of spades could not be shut out.

S. Arabia qualifies for World Cup

DOHA (Agencies) — Saudi Arabia Wednesday qualified for the World Cup finals. In an earlier match China beat Kuwait 1-0 to finish third in Group A.

Iran now take on Japan in the Asian zone playoff on November 16 the winner of which will automatically qualify while the loser advances to a playoff with the Oceania Zone Champion Australia.

South Korea have qualified from Group B in which Japan came in second.

Final Group A Standings

	P	W	D	L	Gf	Ga	Pts
S. Arabia	8	4	2	2	8	6	14
Iran	8	3	3	2	13	8	12
China	8	3	2	3	11	14	11
Qatar	8	3	1	4	7	10	10
Kuwait	8	2	2	4	7	8	8

JORDAN TIMES FAX: 696183

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Al Sabeel weekly receives notice to adjust status within one week

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Press and Publications Department (PPD) has ordered Al Sabeel weekly to "adjust its status" to meet the requirements of new amendments to the 1993 Press and Publications Law within a week, or face suspension, the Jordan Times learned yesterday.

Al Sabeel, the mouthpiece of the Muslim Brotherhood, was one of three weekly newspapers that escaped suspension in September, apparently having been treated by the government as a political party, rather than an independent, newspaper.

An informed source at Al Sabeel told the Jordan Times that his newspaper received notification from the department that it had failed to comply with Articles 8 and 13 of the new, temporary press law introduced in May, and gave the weekly one week to abide by the law.

Article 8 requires that editors-in-chief of weekly newspapers be Jordanian and have a minimum of ten years uninterrupted experience in practicing journalism; and article 13 requires that weeklies raise their registered capital from JD15,000 to JD300,000.

Thirteen weeklies have been suspended for having "failed" to meet those requirements. They are currently embroiled in a legal battle with the government at the Higher Court of Justice over the amendments to the law, which they contend are "unconstitutional" and a "violation of acquired rights." Earlier this week, the Higher Court of Justice handed down a ruling on a case filed independently by one of them, Al Mithaq, on the grounds that the paper did not meet the capital requirement of the law.

Weeklies must adjust by Nov. 15 or their licences will be revoked. At least one weekly, Al Majd, in anticipation of an unfavourable ruling by the court and a fast-approaching deadline, has raised its capital to the required JD300,000, and the appointment yesterday of a new editor-in-chief to Al Bilad indicates that this paper also is in the process of raising its capital.

The Al Sabeel source said that the notification was "surprising" since the department, in examining the weeklies' financial papers in September, also examined those of Al Sabeel, and when it issued its order to suspend 13 weeklies, the Islamist paper was not among them.

"For that reason, Al Sabeel assumed that it had met the requirements of the law," the source said. "This week's notification is vague, and Al Sabeel has sent a request for a more detailed explanation from the department."

Since the outset of the weeklies standoff with the government over the amendments, Al Sabeel has maintained that its house was in order.

The editor-in-chief, Atef Joulani, has been editing the newspaper for nearly three years, prior to which time he worked as a correspondent for a newspaper in Kuwait and held several other positions in the profession over the course of 13 years, Al Sabeel sources have said. In that respect, he meets the requirements of Article 8, the sources added.

Additionally, the sources maintained, Al Sabeel, drawing on the Brotherhood's extensive resources, has a paid-up capital exceeding JD300,000.

The sources also told the Jordan Times that a meeting was expected between Al Sabeel owners and editors and PPD Director Bilal Tal on Saturday, after which time "things should be more clear."

Some journalists believe that the government may now be targeting Al Sabeel now for consistent accusations during and after elections that the government "rigged" the parliamentary elections, and because of the Islamists' boycott of the elections and their ensuing refusal to join the Upper House.

Mr. Tal was unavailable for comment on the issue.

Al Bilad back to market next month with new chief editor

AMMAN (J.T.) — Mahasen Al Imam has been named editor-in-chief of the now-suspended Al Bilad weekly newspaper, a source told the Jordan Times last evening.

The new chief editor will replace Bassem Sakijha, who resigned from his post at Al Bilad after it was purchased by Tajeddine Hroub in early October.

Ms. Al Imam, 49, is a member of the council of the Jordan Press Association and has worked in journalism for 25 years. She worked as a reporter in Al Ra'i, Al Dustour and the now defunct Sawt Al Sha'ab Arabic dailies. Her posts also have included three assignments as chief editor at weekly newspaper, most recently, Sawt Al Mara'a, a weekly newspaper, prior to having been suspended from publication was absorbed by Al Bilad.

In an interview with the Jordan Times, Ms. Al Imam said that Jordanians can expect to see a "new, improved" Al Bilad back on newsstands early next month.

One major change, she said, will be that Al Bilad will no longer use "sex appeal" to attract readers. "I don't believe in using women to sell papers," she said. "They aren't objects. I also hope to cover stories about crime in a more sophisticated manner."



GETTING READY FOR ACTION: Palestinian members of special police unit arrest a suspect during anti-terror training in Gaza Wednesday. Hundreds of Palestinian police took part in the exercise during their graduation ceremony (AFP photo)



CASUALTY OF RUBBER-COATED BULLET: Seven-years-old Palestinian Ali Jawarish, who was shot in the forehead by Israeli soldiers during a demonstration in the West Bank town of Bethlehem lies unconscious in hospital on Wednesday. The child was shot when Israeli soldiers opened fire on a dozen Palestinian youths who had pelted them with stones during celebrations at a Jewish holy site in the city (AFP photo)



British teachers told to 'bash and dash' pupils

LONDON (AFP) — British teachers faced with growing school violence have been advised by one of their unions to "bash and dash" when confronted with an aggressive pupil. In its latest magazine it advised them to aim for the "soft parts" — the solar plexus, knee, elbow or little finger — when cornered. Peter Smith, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said it was making recommendations in response to numerous calls for ways to tackle growing school violence. "Just because you are a teacher there is no reason why you should be a punchbag," he said.

Martin Sheen — new Mother Teresa?

MANILA (AFP) — U.S. actor Martin Sheen on Wednesday visited slum areas in the Philippine capital, shaking hands with Manila's poorest residents and said he saw God in their faces. "I'm a man who is interested in finding God. I look for God for my own salvation, so I come here for myself. "I can't hope to solve anybody's problems, but perhaps I can go away a little bit redeemed in my own soul and I could take my conscience to a new level," he said. Sheen said Tuesday he hoped to keep the spirit of Mother Teresa alive by drawing the world's attention to the destitute.

Man longs for 'meaningful relationship' with Travolta's wife

MIAMI, Florida (AFP) — Kelly Preston, actress wife of film superstar John Travolta, was set to appear in court here Wednesday for a hearing on a restraining order issued against a man who wrote her a weird letter. Joseph Cheffo, 30, tried to deliver the letter to Preston October 7 on a movie set in Florida. "I have been acting like your husband John Travolta for 15 years. And yet, I have not been able to develop an intimate and meaningful relationship with a beautiful and intelligent woman such as yourself," the letter says. "Now we all occasionally go a few years without being able to obtain sex, I realise that, but still I feel there is a missing component here that I am not picking up on," it says.

Prince Charles' love letters from Camilla stolen

LONDON (AFP) — An Italian burglar has confessed to stealing jewellery and private letters belonging to Prince Charles, the heir to the British throne, a press report said Wednesday. Renato Rinino, 35, waited to make the confession until he could no longer be prosecuted under a British law that puts a time limit on bringing charges, according to The Times. Rinino, said to be in an Italian jail for a string of petty offences, claimed he still had letters addressed to Charles from his longstanding friend, Camilla Parker Bowles.

Virility links Lapps and Australian Aborigines

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Lapps and Australian Aborigines do not have much in common at first glance, but they apparently maintain their virility longer than other men — and lifestyle could be a reason. Tuesday's edition of the Swedish daily Dagens Nyheter said a research team from the University of Turku in Finland had discovered a hormone, known as LH, in men in Lapland that carried on working until an advanced age. LH boosts production of the male sexual hormone testosterone, and research showed Lapps could produce as much testosterone at age 70 as people 20 years younger. Lapps live above the Arctic Circle in northern Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia.

Hamas founder assures Arafat of commitment to national unity

GAZA CITY (AP) — Yasser Arafat's most formidable political rival, Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, has assured the Palestinian president that he will not challenge his rule, a senior Palestanian National Authority (PNA) official said Wednesday.

Sheikh Yassin made the pledge in a private meeting with Mr. Arafat on Tuesday held at the Hamas leader's request, said Zakaria Agha, a member of the PNA executive committee who attended the talks.

Israel is closely watching for possible signs of rapprochement between Mr. Arafat and Hamas.

Israel and the United States have demanded that Mr. Arafat crack down on Hamas and arrest its activists. In September, Mr. Arafat closed 16 Hamas institutions in response to two suicide bombings by Hamas in July 30 and sept. 4. However, Mr. Arafat has signalled recently that he might reopen the institutions, among them a kindergarten and a sports club, soon.

Israel says the Hamas institutions to be part of a network that helps suicide bombers carry out their attacks.

In their meeting Tuesday, Mr. Arafat and Sheikh Yassin agreed that both would try to avoid a split among Palestinians, Mr. Agha told the Associated Press.

Sheikh Yassin, 61, told Mr. Arafat he would not challenge his rule. "Sheikh Yassin said President Arafat was the only leader and the president of the Palestinian people," Mr. Agha Said. "He [Yassin] also said the PNA was the only authority."

Mr. Agha said the two leaders did not go into details on how they envisioned their relationship, including a possible Hamas participation in government.

"The direction was that there is a need to continue the strong national dialogue and that infighting among Palestinians is forbidden," Mr. Agha said.

Hamas spokesman Abdul Aziz Rantisi would not give details of the meeting, saying only it was held in a good atmosphere.

Sheikh Yassin, a quadriplegic who was released last month from an Israeli jail after serving eight years of a life term, commands huge popularity among Palestinians, not only among Hamas followers, and is seen as Mr. Arafat's most formidable political rival.

Mr. Arafat's latest crackdown on Hamas in September was undercut when Israel freed Sheikh Yassin from prison in exchange for the release of Israeli agents caught trying to assassinate another Hamas leader, Khalid Misha'al, in Jordan.

After his return to Gaza, Sheikh Yassin sent mixed messages, saying at one time he was ready to consider halting the attacks on Israel under certain conditions and then talking about the need to wage a holy war against Israel.

Freed Russians resting in Sanaa after kidnap ordeal

SANAA (AFP) — Four Russians released after being held hostage by Yemeni tribesmen for almost three weeks were resting here on Wednesday, their embassy said.

A spokesman said the Yemeni authorities handed the two doctors and their wives over to the embassy on Tuesday, a day after their release. "They are well and now resting in Sanaa," he told Agence France Presse (AFP).

The doctors, who work for Yemen's health ministry, and their wives were kidnapped on Oct. 22 in the Dhamar region, 90 km south of Sanaa, as they drove toward Sanaa.

Their captors from the tribe Al Haddaa were demanding death sentences for all four men convicted of raping a 13-year-old boy in their clan. Only one of them has been sentenced to death.

There was no indication if their demand was met.

Meanwhile, Steve Carpenter, an American working for a local oil company is still being held by kidnappers in the region of Barat, 160 km northeast of the capital.

He was seized on Oct. 30 by four armed kidnappers from the Shaef tribe but their demands are not known.

Since 1993, more than 100 foreigners have been kidnapped by Yemen's unruly tribes. All have been freed unharmed.

Netanyahu tightens hold on Likud; rivals threaten to bolt

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu tightened his grip on Israel's right-wing Likud bloc during a three-day meeting of party leaders which ended Wednesday.

But his power grab left Israel's biggest nationalist party more deeply divided than ever, with key politicians threatening to form a breakaway movement and rank-and-file members turning in their Likud cards.

The revolt was sparked by a vote early Wednesday in the 2,750-member Likud central committee to cancel a system of primary elections to pick the party's candidates for prime minister, parliament and local government posts ahead of the next national elections scheduled for the year 2000.

Political rivals and newspaper editorialists said the decision — voted against the wishes of most top Likud leaders — was designed to give Mr. Netanyahu the final say in picking party candidates, a power that will allow him to sideline rivals and rein in unruly members of parliament.

Under the primary system, first adopted for 1996 elections, candidates were chosen by the 200,000 rank-and-file Likud members.

A new system for choosing candidates, expected to put the decision back in the hands of the central committee which is now firmly in the hands of Netanyahu loyalists, is to be adopted within three months.

But the divisions which opened during this week's central committee session led many commentators Wednesday to predict that the Likud could break up by then.

Top Likud officials who firmly opposed the change accused Mr. Netanyahu of purposely deceiving the three-day central committee meeting in Tel Aviv by publicly siding with them in asking for a delay in voting on the primary issue while secretly pushing supporters for immediate action on the matter.

Some delegates accused Mr. Netanyahu's chief of staff, Avigdor Lieberman, of being behind the distributing of pre-marked ballots in favour of cancelling the primary system during the overnight vote.

"Lieberman marked these ballots, this is a mafia action. What has been done today will ruin the party," one unnamed delegate told Israel Radio.

The aim of the Netanyahu camp, critics charge, is to give the prime minister added leverage over the fractious Likud parliamentary group and to weaken potential rivals for party leadership, notably among key cabinet ministers.

If the selection of candidates is returned to the hands of the central committee, Mr. Netanyahu could effectively enforce loyalty to his policies by threatening to oust unruly deputies when new elections are held.

Mr. Netanyahu also apparently feared a challenge to his position as prime minister in the event of early elections.

"There is a crisis of trust," Science Minister Michael Eitan told Israel Radio after the vote. "Instead of leaving here united, we leave here with greater differences than when we entered."

Communications Minister Limor Livnat warned in a speech before the convention Tuesday that abandoning the primary system would fuel corruption and cronyism in government.

"Did we win power just to lick the boots of the central committee by distributing jobs to its members," she asked.

"We want jobs, we want jobs," chanted the audience in response. The adoption of the primary system deprived central committee members of a key means of pressure on ministers to obtain positions in the vast state sector in Israel.

Likud rank-and-file reacted with disgust to Wednesday's vote, with many calling radio talks shows to announce they were halting payment of dues to the party.

Trouble was also brewing at the top, where such key Likud figures as Ariel Sharon, Benny Begin and Dan Meridor were openly furious over Mr. Netanyahu's manoeuvring over the primary issue.

Turkey's Welfare Party faces probable ban

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey's Islamist Welfare Party, in power only five months ago, is fighting against the odds for its survival in the face of an all-out assault from the fiercely pro-secular military.

The Welfare Party, or Refah, whose leader Necmettin Erbakan was forced to resign as prime minister in June under the pressure of the military, is still the largest party in parliament.

It is being accused by top prosecutor, Vural Savas, of being "a centre for activities incompatible with the articles of the constitution on the secular state."

Mr. Savas asked the constitutional court to abolish the party on May 21, when Mr. Erkaban was still prime minister.

"No party in Turkey or abroad deserves to be dissolved like Refah does," Mr. Savas said in his final address to the court Tuesday. In his case against Refah, Mr. Savas has used various speeches of Mr. Erbakan, his ministers, and Refah deputies that his claims shows their hostility to the secular state.

Mr. Savas reminded the court that before his appointment as premier in June 1996, Mr. Erbakan said Refah's "just order will impose itself whatever happens. The question is whether it will come peacefully or through bloodshed."

He also quoted Mr. Erbakan recently telling his supporters to donate money to the Kanal 7 pro-Refah television channel to "help the jihad [Islamic holy war]."

Mr. Erbakan, founder of Refah, is due to make his final address to the court Nov. 18, and a decision is expected by the end of the year. The Islamist party has based its defence on the principles of democracy. "We are not defending Refah but democracy, human rights and the rule of law," Oguzhan Asilturk, a leading figure of the party, said Tuesday.

Refah accuses the army of forcing it out of power in an undemocratic way, and argues that such a ban would not be imposed in any European Union (EU) country.

Turkey wants to join the EU, and some commentators believe that the fear of a negative reaction to the ban by EU countries may act as a deterrent.

Most commentators, however, consider the abolition of Refah as inevitable, and in anticipation of such a verdict, Refah leaders have already laid the groundwork for a new Islamist party.

"We feel that all we are witnessing now is a mere formality and that the closure of the Islamist party is a foregone conclusion," the editorialist of the Turkish Daily News wrote in his column Wednesday.

It is the first time in the history of the Turkish republic, founded by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in 1923, that such a case has been brought against a ruling party, although three parties founded by Mr. Erbakan have already been banned.

"If we believe that fundamentalism is not a threat, we are making a serious mistake," an unidentified general told the press.

The army, which considers itself the guardian of the secular nature of modern Turkey, forced Mr. Erbakan to resign and has since warned the public and politicians against Islamists.

Jewish radicals celebrate Rabin slaying outside assassin's prison

BEERSHEVA (AFP) — A dozen Jewish radicals celebrated the second anniversary of Yitzhak Rabin's murder Wednesday outside the prison of his assassin, Yigal Amir, the Israeli news agency ITIM reported.

The group, led by a well-known far-right agitator, Avigdor Askin, blew into a Shofar, or ram's horn, in a Jewish rite to dispel evil.

Militants of the leftist Meretz Party who had gathered outside the southern Israeli prison in expectation of a demonstration by Amir supporters tried to wrest the Shofar from Mr. Askin's hands but were pushed back by police.

"You are a cancer, you're the next murderers," shouted one Meretz activist.

One of Mr. Askin's group responded: "We're not from the same people. You're not even Israeli."

Mr. Askin was briefly placed under house arrest for participating in front of television cameras in an ancient rite casting a curse on Rabin a month before he was gunned down by Amir on Nov. 4, 1995.

Israel held its first official day of mourning for Rabin on Wednesday, the second anniversary of the assassination according to the Hebrew calendar.